The Absence of Divine Intervention

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The Absence of Divine Intervention

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Summary

"You would put yourself in a cage of my making?"

"Yes."

All Hannibal's barriers were down, his voice earnest, his eyes without guile. "And if I set you free to do what you wish?"

"Without you?" Hannibal asked softly, sounding pained at the idea. Will could feel the anxiety rolling off Hannibal like waves. It was disconcerting to know just how much the doctor abhorred the idea of being without him.

"With me. Without me," Will responded. To give Hannibal the choice. Though, he was coming to accept that neither of them truly had a choice to be apart.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Absence of Divine Intervention.

Awareness came by degrees, Will swimming to the surface of consciousness, his breath slightly raspy, throat dry. A sheet under him, a blanket heavy over his hips and legs, the odd sensation that the room was shifting from side to side. The scent of brine. With burgeoning coherency came the pain, both sharp and dull. Cheek pulling as his eyes fluttered open to dim light, still too bright for his eyes to handle. A dull throb in his shoulder pushed to the back of the catalogue of pains that shouted for his attention. He shifted, startled by the warm body beside him, curled against him. Breath, warm and slightly laboured against his shoulder.

Hannibal.

A repressed grunt of pain came from the man laying at his side, and Will fumbled his hand out to be caught, fingers laced together.

I'm here. We're here together. We're alive.

Will squeezed Hannibal's fingers weakly acknowledging the silent comfort. He shifted carefully, slowly, turning onto his side keeping their entwined hands between them. Hannibal now lay on his back, his head turned towards Will's, amber eyes bloodshot, weary and bright with his own pain. He glanced down to note the neat bandage swathed around Hannibal's middle.

"How? Where?" Will whispered. His throat protested at that and he fumbled at the side of the bed for a bottle of water, handing it to Hannibal after he'd taken a sip or two.

Hannibal's throat bobbed as he swallowed, "Chiyoh. We are on a boat." His normally cultured accent sounded rough, as rough as Will's voice. He reached up gently and swept a few curls off Will's forehead, then down, carefully avoiding the wound on his cheek to stroke his thumb over his jaw.

Will nodded his understanding of Hannibal's succinct response, appreciative of the lack of unnecessary elaboration that the doctor usual favoured. He leaned into the touch of Hannibal's hand, sighing softly. Hannibal's breath hitched the slightest amount, his eyes dilating.

"Our relationship has been made up of seduction and deceit," Will murmured. He nuzzled Hannibal's hand, meeting his eyes resolutely, "can we remove the deceit from the equation?"

Hannibal nodded, their eyes locked together. "We have no reason to hide anything from one another any longer, Will." His lashes lowered, eyes flitting to his thumb on Will's jaw. "I surrender myself entirely to you. In every way, how ever you wish."

Will sucked in a breath at the fervent tone of Hannibal's words. He meant them. "You would put yourself in a cage of my making?"

"Yes."

All Hannibal's barriers were down, his voice earnest, his eyes without guile. "And if I set you free to do what you wish?"

"Without you?" Hannibal asked softly, sounding pained at the idea. Will could feel the anxiety rolling off Hannibal like waves. It was disconcerting to know just how much the doctor abhorred the idea of being without him.

"With me. Without me," Will responded. To give Hannibal the choice. Though, he was coming to accept that neither of them truly had a choice to be apart.

"With you I could be happy, content. I could experience things I have never thought possible for me." His eyes slid away, lips turned down. "Without you…I do not want to consider that reality. We are so intertwined, I…I would flounder, bobbing in the waves, no star to guide me." He swallowed thickly, amber eyes darting to Will's again, bright in the dim light with tears forming. "After Mischa died, I lived in silence for years, not speaking, residing inside my own mind. I think to be without you would feel the same."

Will digested that for a long moment, recognising that Hannibal had imparted a long hidden truth to him about his sister and his reaction to her death. "Would you let me walk away from you?"

Hannibal bit back a whine, closing his eyes. "Yes. If you wish it, I would let you leave me." He pulled his hand away only for Will to capture it and press his lips to Hannibal's palm. A tortured sob tore from Hannibal's throat, a tear slipping from beneath closed lids to trail down his cheek. "Will, please."

Inching closer, Will kissed Hannibal's palm again then brought it back to his jaw, "I don't think I could leave you, even if I wanted to." Fierce hope and tentative relief flared in Hannibal's eyes as they fluttered open to stare at Will. He winced as Hannibal rolled onto his side with a small huff of pain so that he could look at Will properly. "You said you could be happy with me, what would that look like?"

"Mano širdie," Hannibal whispered, tipping his head to Will's, resting their foreheads together gently. "Worship. I would worship you in any way you wanted me to. Immediately, it would involve convalescence somewhere quiet and private of course, however, if you wanted to stay in that sort of state I would not protest."

"Hannibal," Will chided softly, mildly concerned by this new subservient cannibal laying beside him. He'd been so fierce and focused in his pursuit, the change was drastic and devastating. "You are a social creature despite your other…pursuits. I accept you, I see you

as you are. I would want to be your equal, not your keeper. I don't want you to have to retreat inside your memory palace simply to live with me."

Pride bloomed in Hannibal's smile, "ah, dievinu, aš tave myliu. You exceed my expectations every time. Could I show you the world as I see it, take you places that fill your heart with beauty?"

Will grinned at him, nodding, "maybe be a little more careful than you usually are."

Hannibal pouted making Will laugh which pulled at the stitches in his cheek. Seeing the older man pout was an unexpected joy.

"I know how to be circumspect," the doctor retorted, mildly offended but amused at the same time. "I have spent years being careful." He pulled back a little to inspect Will's cheek, "no more laughing, mano meile, you will pull your stitches out."

"Yes, alright," Will muttered, rolling his eyes. "But that was not what I meant and you know it. I was not talking about your murder suit, which is ridiculous by the way, if effective, I was talking about your need for certain things. It was how the FBI found you in Florence. I am not saying you should deny yourself completely, I know that would be difficult for you. Just…ration it a little, maybe."

"No more Bâtard-Montrachet?" Will raised a brow and the doctor shrugged. Hannibal's thumb swept over Will's jaw, "I can agree to those terms." Honeyed eyes dipped to Will's lips for the barest moment before locking onto his eyes again. The blatant desire burning in Hannibal's gaze made Will squirm, something the doctor noted, schooling his expression so quickly it was as if he'd snatched down the shades. Will hated that. He wanted Hannibal open to him.

But he suspected he wasn't quite ready to give Hannibal everything he needed. Not yet. That didn't mean they couldn't discuss it and Will had no intention of shying away from the subject at that moment. Not while Hannibal was being so blatantly honest.

"Our life together…" He paused, wanting to broach the subject but at a slant. "In Florence, you had a…partner." He spat the last word with disgust.

Nostrils flaring, Hannibal cocked his head, "I had a false wife, not a partner, Will." His thumb dragged over Will's bottom lip. "She was never an equal, never a partner. She was a placeholder for what I truly wanted."

Will swallowed thickly, "and what, or who, was it you truly wanted?" He shook his head, "no, you don't need to answer that, I know already." A small smile tugged at Hannibal's lips, eyes flashing.

"Do I have you, Will?"

He inhaled sharply at the desire lacing Hannibal's tone. "Yes. You have me and I have you. We are even more conjoined than I thought before. I cannot survive without you, Hannibal."

Hannibal leaned his head against Will's again, "no more than I could survive without you." His breath was warm on Will's face as he breathed out, "I was heavy handed in my care of you before, unconscionably sloppy and impatient, I will not do so again."

Will let his hand come between them to rest on Hannibal's chest, "no more need to whisper through the chrysalis."

Hannibal's hand slid from his face to his nape, "you are more beautiful than any of my wildest imaginings. Ethereal and stunning. How I feel is no longer inconvenient, it is welcome."

"And I welcome it," Will whispered back. "I may not be able to reciprocate in certain areas, but I…I *want* to. Can that be enough for now?"

"Laukiu nesulaukiu."

"Hmm, and what does that mean?"

Hannibal huffed a soft laugh, "my native tongue, it means that I wait, yet I cannot wait. An expression of intense anticipation. Visceral almost." He leaned back enough to meet Will's gaze, "I will wait however long I need to, mano širdie."

Fighting back a yawn, Will nuzzled closer, "I'll ask about that one and the other things you said too, but right now, I want to sleep again."

Warm lips pressed to his forehead briefly, "then sleep, I will be here when you wake."

Their days blended one into another, quiet and blurred by the medications they both needed to take. Chiyoh docked periodically to take on more supplies, fuel and fresh water. Will hardly saw her, tended by Hannibal. The only time she really came into the small cabin that served as both bedroom and sick room, it was to help Hannibal with the wound on his back, in a place he could hardly reach himself and Will was in no condition to do it for him.

Eventually the cuts and abrasions on their bodies began to heal and fade, bruises turning to a sickly yellow. Will's cheek started to itch unbearably which Hannibal assured him mean that it would be time to take out the stitches soon. The fall had compounded their injuries sustained from the fight with the Dragon, a sprained ankle and wrist for Will, a broken bone in Hannibal's foot was the only additional hurt he would admit to. Will suspected he had at least one broken rib too, but didn't voice it, letting Hannibal maintain his facade of stoicism.

It made them ungainly and resulted in them using one another as a form of balance as they shuffled back and forth between the bed and the tight little bathroom.

"How long have we been at sea?" Will asked when they were both finally stable enough to inch their way up on deck late one afternoon.

It was Chiyoh that answered from the helm, "ten days."

"We spent the first eighteen hours after Chiyoh collected us getting medical attention from a former compatriot of mine," Hannibal added as he gingerly lowered himself onto a bench.

Will suspected that the majority of that time had been spent on Hannibal considering the wound to his stomach and back from the Dragon's bullet. He glanced down at the doctor's foot, wrapped neatly in a bandage and not a cast. He'd had glimpses of the stomach wound, enough to know it appeared to be healing well, and Chiyoh had still been tending the one in his back while Hannibal insisted on caring for Will's wounds himself.

"How is your foot?" he asked quietly, knowing he was to blame for that as it had been incurred when they hit the water, twisting himself in Will's arms to take the brunt of the impact.

Hannibal patted the bench beside him for Will to sit, "I've had worse. As long as I keep it relatively still it should heal adequately." He sighed contentedly as Will took his place beside him. "I believe I understand why you did it." He didn't need to clarify what *it* was. Will knew. Their tumble off the cliff.

Lowering his head, Will bit his lip. "I…I couldn't let them take you, they wouldn't have let you live, even had you surrendered. I…I thought we could die together or survive together, either way it would be with you." He sighed deeply, "Jack and Alana, they…I guess *we* really, had a plan, and I had my own agenda of course. Kill the Dragon, then you. So, I gave them that."

"Yes, you did." Hannibal stroked his hand that lay between them. "A rebirth for both of us."

Late afternoons out on deck became a regular excursion, a chance for fresh air and a little vitamin D, and a place to talk quietly.

"The Norman Chapel in Palermo, you left me a Valentine, yeah?"

Hannibal's lips lifted at the corners, a single dip of his head indicating what Will already knew. "My broken heart," he murmured. He cupped Will's face, thumb brushing over the now healed scar, though it was still burnished red, not yet paled. "Yet, like the teacup, it came back together."

"It was beautiful." He glanced away for a moment, debating the efficacy of explaining his own tableau left in the bowels of Lecter Castle. Somehow, he thought, Hannibal was already aware of it, even if he hadn't seen it for himself. "I left you a firefly."

Hannibal confirmed his suspicion with a wider smile. "I wish I could witness it personally, but I am sure it is equally beautiful. Would you describe it for me, mano širdie?"

Snuggled into Hannibal's side, Will told him in a breathless whisper, describing wings made of broken pieces of glass so that fractals of light would bounce off them and onto the walls. "I didn't take his life, but I was the agent of his demise." He flicked his eyes to Chiyoh at

the helm, not detecting a sign that she was listening, though he wasn't sure he'd ever see one anyway, inscrutable as she was.

The doctor hummed in agreement, "I heard you, in the catacombs." Will tensed slightly and Hannibal sighed, large hand sweeping up his side. "I don't think I was ready to see you face to face, but I heard you." Hannibal's accent had thickened, the consonants softening, the 't' in don't almost non-existent. Will had come to recognise that Hannibal spoke thus when affected or weary, both states entirely endearing.

He wondered idly what Hannibal sounded like in the throes of passion, dismissing the thought before it could take hold and derail their conversation.

Hannibal noted something, because of course he did. Thankfully he seemed to sense that it was one of the few things they didn't discuss and left it to dissipate on the breeze. Bedelia. Molly. Embarking on a sexual aspect to their relationship. Everything else was on the table. After Will had admitted that he wanted to want Hannibal, the older man had been careful not to push the boundary on that, only allowing himself gentle kisses to Will's forehead as they both drifted off into blessed slumber. They touched, a stroke of a face here, lacing fingers together there, leaning into each other, helping each other shower with a modicum of privacy achieved with draped washcloths. But it was intensely intimate.

Will allowed himself to indulge in what he'd refrained from doing and pulled back to simply look at Hannibal in the rosy light of sunset.

The doctor had his head tipped up, eyes closed as he enjoyed the last rays of sunshine, his skin still so pale after three years entombed, no longer slightly flushed with fever and Will could imagine it wouldn't take long for his healthy tan to reemerge. His eyes swept over the details of Hannibal's face, pale brows more obvious against the pallor of his complexion, equally pale lashes casting faint shadows under his eyes. Sculpted cheekbones that had always distracted Will when he had managed to look at the other man's face. And such lush lips, sensual, decadent, thoroughly distracting lips, no matter what the doctor said.

His hair had more silver in it than it had before his incarceration, still as silky looking as it had been then, shorter with his state mandated hair cut. But it suited him, just as the longer style had.

Will wondered if he'd grow it again.

He avoided scrutinising Hannibal's body, he'd seen most of it in the shower, but he mourned the current state of it, bruised and battered with wounds that Will hadn't put there himself. He blinked once at that thought. He no longer wanted to kill Hannibal, but the thought that the man bore scars that been inflicted by someone else left him with a sour taste in his mouth.

When he looked up, Hannibal was looking right back at him, lips turned up at the corners in his customary slight smile that hinted at amusement. His eyes held a now familiar warmth, their whiskey hued depths almost twinkling as he stared back at Will.

His breath hitched, "you're beautiful." His cheeks heated at the blurted words, yet Hannibal looked serene, content, his smile widening a fraction.

“As are you, Botticelli would have adored you,” Hannibal whispered, hand coming up to cup Will’s cheek just below his healing wound. “Mano širdie.”

He couldn’t look away, entranced by the beast that was Hannibal, so reverent. “What does it mean?”

Hannibal leaned towards him, letting his lips flirt with the lobe of Will’s ear, making his heart stutter in his chest like a caged bird fluttering, battering itself against his ribs in place of bars, “my heart.” Leaving his hand on Will’s cheek he tilted his head and pressed a gentle kiss to the other. “You are my heart, Will.” His brow pressed against Will’s, “we have removed the deceit, can we keep the seduction?”

Will laughed softly, “our whole relationship has been an elaborate seduction, I have no inclination to stop it now.”

Hannibal hummed thoughtfully, “and what shall we do about that?”

Lacing their fingers together, Will smiled at him, “I look forward to finding out.”

Chapter End Notes

All comments by Hannibal in Lithuanian will be translated in a later note, for now they remain as they are due to Will not knowing what they mean, unless Hannibal has translated for him. Suffice to say, Hannibal is being his usual extra self, and I am sure that some of you know what's he's said regardless.

Chapter 2

Their first semi permanent stop was in Cuba, eschewing Havana for Matanzas. They stayed for a month, reveling in being back on land and not having a shifting deck beneath their feet. Hannibal's complexion improved, as did his foot and the ribs that Will had suspected broken knit themselves back together. It amused Will to see Hannibal in attire that was something other than his customary bespoke suits. In Cuba, Hannibal adopted loose white linen in the form of pants that sat low on his hips and shirts that billowed as he walked serenely beside Will in his shorts and t-shirts.

Adopting the guise of a married couple was so easy. Hannibal procured rings for them, who knew where from, or for how long he'd had them, but he did and so they each had a finger adorned with simple onyx bands. Elegant, because of course they were. Hannibal had chosen them. But Will appreciated the simplicity of them, and was more than enamoured of the fact that they matched. And while they couldn't officially marry, not while Will had a legal wife back in the States, and while they were both using assumed names, it felt perfectly natural.

They certainly acted like a married couple when they were out in public, linking hands discretely, Will gazing up at Hannibal as the older man leaned toward him. They looked intimate and any other cover wouldn't have suited how they were around one another.

Hannibal's seduction of Will was progressing slowly. They had only just healed enough to feel confident about a lengthy stroll, and the doctor seemed content to take his time. Will, himself, was filled with the anticipation of it. It felt very much like an old fashioned courtship.

When they had arrived, Will had discovered that Hannibal owned the property that they would be staying in, a much smaller, more subdued residence than Will would expect from the flashy cannibal he had come to know. What wasn't a surprise was the safe filled with documents and cash. Hannibal had taken photos of Will, suitably dressed and primped, for documents of his own, handing Chiyoh a stack of cash and the memory card from the camera.

Apparently she knew just what to do with it as she vanished with a sharp nod.

He'd washed off the makeup that had mimicked a healthy tan and stared at his face in the mirror. Spotted Hannibal leaning against the door frame with elegant grace, the honey tone of his eyes fixed deliberately on Will's face and drifting no lower.

"How many aliases do you have?"

Hannibal's lips quirked the barest fraction, "a dozen. It pays to be prepared, mylimasis." He strode forward and brushed Will's curls off his face gently, reverently. "The

placeholder said that I wear a person suit, my alternate personas I can slip in and out of just as easily as wearing a suit."

Will snorted at Hannibal calling Bedelia a placeholder instead of using her name. They never referred to either Bedelia or Molly as a wife when they skirted close to the topic. Hannibal was so obviously jealous of Molly that Will avoided speaking of her in any capacity. Will, in turn, felt decidedly uncomfortable about Bedelia and Hannibal used various terms to speak of her. He wasn't sure if it was jealousy or simply hatred that he felt about Hannibal's former psychiatrist.

Refraining from chasing that subject, Will latched onto the new endearment.

"Mylimasis?"

Hannibal shifted his eyes away for a moment, a common occurrence when he had been caught being overtly affectionate. When he had his emotions hidden behind his mask again, he bent his head to brush his lips to Will's cheek, "beloved," he whispered.

Letting himself lean into Hannibal, Will smiled where he couldn't see, though he suspected that the doctor would know regardless. "You know many different languages, yet you use your native tongue to name me in various ways."

Hannibal stiffened against him, then relaxed when Will stroked a hand up his back, feeling the bump of the scar through his shirt, higher to the brand between his shoulder blades. "It feels more…personal, appropriate, to do so in Lithuanian."

"I like it," Will murmured, turning his head so he could look up at the older man in his embrace. "It feels like you're giving me a part of yourself when you do it." He stroked Hannibal's sharp cheekbone, "don't slip behind your mask when you're with me, Hannibal. Let me see you. You told me you surrendered to me, please don't go back on that."

With a deep sigh, the mask slipped away, "I meant what I said, however I find it difficult to put into practise. You undo me in ways I never anticipated. I *feel* things I never anticipated." His hand cupped the back of Will's neck, leaning in to rub his nose over the younger man's delicately. "I have been feeling things for you for a very long time now, but the first time I experienced the pain of losing you was when Tobias Budge said he had killed the men who came to question him. I was bereft, I felt sorrow and anger. I felt the loss of something that hadn't been consummated."

"You're scared that I'll leave you," Will murmured, clutching at Hannibal to try and assure him of the opposite. "You gave me the smile on my stomach, but you cut me so carefully, knowing I wouldn't die. You felt betrayed so you needed to betray me. As the Ripper you were careful, with me you're unfettered, because I make you feel." Hannibal inhaled sharply, turning his head away until Will made him turn back, meeting his eyes. "We've hurt each other because neither of us was sure of what was between us. Or attempting to deny it."

"Yes," Hannibal hissed, wrenching away. "I am still…"

"Unsure? Wary? Holding back from lashing out like a trapped and wounded animal."

The doctor keened softly, his back quivering, head down. "Yes. I no longer desire blood on my hands if it's yours." He sighed, a deeply confused sound. "I am unaccustomed to the sensation of fear."

Wrapping his arms around Hannibal's trim waist, Will leaned his head on his shoulder, "I don't want to hurt you either, and I'm not leaving you, Hannibal. I want to be with you."

Hannibal relaxed, twisting in Will's grasp, his mask gone again, "I want to believe that, and on some level I do, it just may take me some time for the reality of it to sink in."

"We have time, time for us to trust each other. Time to be together, Hannibal." He tipped his face up and pressed the softest of kisses to Hannibal's lips pulling back to see desire, hope, delight and still a little wariness colouring the doctor's gaze. "Time to learn each other in this new life of ours."

"Will," Hannibal whispered, fervently, warm palms cupping his face and searching his gaze. He dipped his head and claimed his lips in a more passionate kiss that Will opened up to eagerly, still feeling the tight restraint in Hannibal's mouth on his. He wanted to undo that restraint, show Hannibal he meant every words he'd said. Parting his lips against Hannibal's he slid his tongue between them to lick at the older man, delighted by Hannibal's deep groan. Large, deft, dangerous hands slid into his hair, tilting his head so Hannibal could deepen the kiss, introducing his own tongue with a flick against Will's. It was the most languid, sensual kiss Will had ever experienced, plush lips moving over his, dexterous tongue entwining with his.

Heady in the intensity. Engulfing. Overwhelming. Flooding his senses with everything Hannibal felt. He sank into it, feeling desire and want surge as the kiss continued.

It was Hannibal that broke away first, chest heaving, cheeks flushed with pleasure as he leaned his forehead to Will's. Debauched and dishevelled in a way he'd never seen before.

"This is how I want to see you. No person suit, no mask, just you. The beast free and unfettered. My Hannibal."

"Will, aš tave myliu," Hannibal whispered, eyes hooded but completely open to Will.

Will smiled at him, "and what does that one mean?" He had an idea, but waited for Hannibal to confirm it for himself. The emotion shining in the man's eyes was impossible to misconstrue.

A wry grin pulled at the older man's lips. "Not yet."

Will laughed. "I could just look it up," he teased noting Hannibal's amusement at that.

"But you won't. You want to me to tell you." He nuzzled Will's cheek with his own, the younger man swearing he would be purring if he were capable of it. "And I wish to wait until you are ready to hear it."

Hannibal's seduction of Will moved at a steadier pace after their kiss, willingly showing his affection now that he was assured it was wanted, that he would not be rebuffed. Chiyoh returned after a week or so with Will's new passport and papers, handing them over silently before telling Hannibal that she had retrieved his armor from Baltimore and would have it stored safely until he sent for it.

With both of them suitably concealed as new men, they left Matanzas behind. The next month was spent hopping from Haiti to St. Kitts to Martinique to Grenada and finally an extended stay in Caracas, Venezuela.

"This is the murder capital of the world, Adelmo," Will murmured to Hannibal. The past month had made it more natural to refer to Hannibal by his current alias, but it still didn't trip off his tongue like the man's real name did, and it didn't make Hannibal's eyes spark in quite the same way.

Hannibal practically radiated smugness. "Hiding in plain sight, Oliver," he drawled right back.

Will rolled his eyes when they pulled up at their new home, located in a wealthy district at the eastern end of the valley that Caracas nestled in.

"You call this hiding in plain sight?" He gestured to the facade of the new house, "this is… exorbitant." A double height portico supported by four columns was the first thing he noticed as they entered the small gated community in El Hatillo. Hannibal merely grasped his hand and led him through the front door. Inside was relatively modest by the doctor's standards, but certainly well above Will's. When he saw the kitchen, he understood the appeal it held. All very shiny and new looking, and from the eager glint in Hannibal's eyes, perfect for a gourmet chef. "How many bedrooms?" he asked to drag Hannibal's attention from what was apparently a Gaggenau fridge, whatever that meant. Apparently it was a good thing, the fussy cannibal obviously approving, long deft fingers stroking over brushed steel.

"Five, with four bathrooms," the doctor answered, running his fingers over the wine rack with a pensive expression.

Will sighed, "what do we need five bedrooms for? It's not like Chiyoh is staying with us. Or is she?" He glanced about as he wandered through the rooms downstairs, noting the more modern decor than Hannibal's usual style.

Hannibal stroked his arm trying to placate him, "No, she won't be staying with us, at least not often. I thought to use one as an art studio, and perhaps you could use another for tying flies and so on."

Will's mind was spinning. "How long will we stay here? Will you redecorate?" he asked, eyes darting to the furniture in the living room, so at odds with Hannibal's tastes.

Hannibal sensed his distress, leading him over to the black leather sectional couch and sinking down into the cushions with a little huff of annoyance. "I may want to change a few things, nothing too extravagant, I promise you. This horrendous couch for one, I feel like it is

going to swallow me. I was thinking we could stay for at least six months, perhaps a year, longer. Let things settle a little, mano meile."

"And the owner won't mind such a vague timeline?"

"Will, I purchased it, it's ours, we can do what we like, leave when we wish." He winced a little when Will gaped at him, holding his hands up, "it wasn't terribly expensive and I can afford it easily. I wanted us to have somewhere safe and comfortable." Will slumped into the stupidly plush cushions, shaking his head. "Even once we move on, we could come back occasionally, or we could sell it."

Will leaned forward, head in his hands, "how much? How much did you spend, Hannibal?"

"Much less than I usually spend on property," Hannibal said defensively. Will glared at him. "500,000 euros. I did look at one that was more to my taste, and that was 1.2 million. This was one of the more modestly priced properties in the area." He rushed into the silence when Will groaned, "I thought we could make it ours, mano širdie."

Rather than moan about it, Will took a deep breath, calming himself as he thought through it all. Hannibal was used to spending as he saw fit, he *had* constrained himself. For fuck's sake, the man owned a *castle*. Will had seen the other houses as they drove in and he was sure Hannibal could easily have spent a great deal more and drawn attention to them. They did have to be careful, but that didn't mean living like paupers. He considered the house with a new eye. It wasn't ostentatious. It was nice and airy, the high ceilings giving an extra sense of space. He cringed. Hannibal had spent three years cooped up in one single room. He deserved a little space to feel free.

Will examined why he felt so uncomfortable.

Money. Money was one of the great divides between he and Hannibal. And he wasn't contributing to their life.

Reaching out, he grabbed Hannibal's hand, lacing their fingers together and he felt the older man sigh in relief. "I'm sorry, it's a nice house, Hannibal. I'm just a little…" He sighed deeply, "I feel like a leech. You funded our escape, paid for everything and I feel…useless. Superfluous."

Hannibal stroked his fingers through Will's curls, "mano širdie, you have given me something of immeasurable value. Money cannot compare. I have my freedom, and more importantly, I have you." He smiled at Will, a full, rare smile. "I am accustomed to my wealth, however, you are not. My wealth was an accident of birth, and while I have expanded on it, it's inconsequential to my comfort." Squeezing Will's hand he rose from the couch and headed to where their luggage was waiting by the front door. He extracted two folders from one of the cases and sat back down. "I felt we would come to this point sooner or later and I wish to make you understand how little the money means to me."

"No, it's ok, Hannibal," Will said as he spied what the first folder contained. The first page seemed to be a summation of Hannibal's finances and assets. His eyes widened as he scanned down the page. "Holy shit," he whispered in awe.

"This page is a summary of everything in my own name, the subsequent ones underneath list assets in other names. Everything under my name has been divided between Chiyoh and a distant cousin. Or it will be once I am legally declared deceased. Chiyoh will then divide that up and half she will keep, the other half will be distributed to my other aliases. Some of the Lecter holdings have been in Chiyoh's name for many years as a precaution."

"Hannibal, some of these earn interest ten times what I earned in a year with the FBI." He glanced at Hannibal, "in a month."

The doctor refrained from commenting, merely slipping a sheet of paper out of the second folder, looking over its contents before he presented it to Will. "You said you wanted us to be equal, this is in part my attempt to help with that."

Taking the paper, Will frowned down at it. His new name was at the top, followed by a list similar to the one he'd seen moments ago. A list of properties and assets. His head snapped up, mouth open. "What…what is this?"

The house Hannibal had just purchased was at the top of a distressingly long list.

"Everything under my current name is also jointly owned by Oliver. You." He pointed an elegant finger further down the list, "and these are things I put in your name alone." He lifted a piece of elastic from inside the cover of the second folder and retrieved a tablet, pressing the 'on' button and waiting for the screen to load before he turned it to Will.

Will grasped it, looking over the apps loaded, eyes finding a banking app in the corner. He glanced at Hannibal who nodded for him to tap on it. While he waited for it to generate the home screen, Hannibal handed him another piece of paper, this one with bank account details and the password on the account. *Winston*. "Hannibal," he murmured, overcome.

Hannibal's eyes were warm when he looked up, "you can change the password if you wish, you can do whatever you like with the funds. I wanted you to feel we were on more equal footing, at least financially. You can look over the investments, do anything you like with them, they are yours, Will."

"I don't need all this," he muttered as he gazed in disbelief at the multitude of decimal points in this list of funds that were apparently at his disposal.

"I know you don't, mano širdie. I wanted to give it to you." He paused, pressing a kiss to Will's cheek. "There is no obligation attached."

Will blushed, "no, I know that, that would be…base, distasteful."

Chapter 3

Hannibal didn't make any further large purchases that Will was aware of, but he had given up worrying about it. The doctor was eager to preserve his freedom and Will's so he was unlikely to deviate from the rules they had set. The couch that so offended Hannibal moved to an upstairs bedroom, a room that was joined to another by a shared bathroom. Hannibal took the other for his studio and library, while the one with the couch became Will's study.

It took him a few weeks before he made his first purchases, feeling guilty while he did it, but the joy on Hannibal's face when his fly tying gear arrived was infectious. Eventually he added a small flat screen tv so he could listen to the international news in English as he worked. The apparent death of the notorious cannibal, Hannibal Lecter and former Special Agent of the FBI, Will Graham, was steadily moving further and further down the running order in the news casts. Some days they weren't mentioned at all. Will knew Hannibal periodically checked the FBI website to check on their status. *Presumed dead.*

Hannibal, in the meantime, after replacing the overly plush leather couch with something far more suited to his tastes slowly added to his new library and purchased art supplies, waxing poetically about the wonderful light in his new studio. He also refurbished his bedroom, Will glimpsing a massive four poster bed through the door across from his own. It looked very comfortable and inviting, but he and Hannibal had not quite ventured into that sort of intimacy as yet.

His own bedroom was rather simply furnished with a queen size bed, (linens purchased by Hannibal with a small smirk) a rug he'd found online that he liked the colours of, two bedside tables and that was it. The wardrobe was sparsely occupied with the clothes he'd picked up along the way from Cuba and only supplemented by two suits that Hannibal had insisted on for when they eventually decided to venture out for dinner or to an art gallery. One a deep blue, the other a green so dark it was almost black with satin lapels.

There was one purchase that he felt the need to discuss with his partner.

He felt a touch of trepidation about it and Hannibal's reaction.

Screwing up his nerve, Will walked through the adjoining bathroom to Hannibal's studio, finding him at his desk, charcoal in hand as he sketched. A picture of Will himself looking out over the ocean from their house in Cuba. It made him flush a little, but he was becoming accustomed to Hannibal drawing him. The evidence of that was all over the room.

"Hannibal, can we talk about something?"

The doctor raised his head, placing down his piece of charcoal and wiping his hands as he swiveled in his chair to face him. "Yes," he answered, tilting his head like an inquisitive bird.

Will crossed to the desk and leaned against it, “I…I would like to get a dog.”

Contrary to what he thought might happen, a lengthy discussion about shedding and the like, Hannibal beamed at him, “of course, mano širdie. We have the room. Would you like me to accompany you to the shelter, or would you prefer a pure bred?”

All the arguments about training and how he would be the one to make sure the dog was cared for flew out the window as Will gaped at the older man in shock.

“I…”

Hannibal gazed up at him serenely, “you thought I would not agree.”

Will shook his head, “no, I really thought you’d fight me on it, give me a lecture about shedding and stuff.” He chuckled ruefully, “I had so many counter arguments ready, now I don’t quite know what to say.”

With a hand placed on Will’s knee, Hannibal’s lips twisted in one of his half smiles, “I witnessed how you were with your pack in Wolf Trap, mano širdie. They were well trained and well behaved. You cared for them deeply and I have no doubt you would care for a new pet. I had even considered finding one for you as a gift, but thought better of it, I thought you would want to choose yourself.”

Darting down quickly to kiss Hannibal briefly, he grinned when he saw the blissful expression on the cannibal’s face, “thank you. I promise to clip their nails and make sure the furniture doesn’t suffer.”

Hannibal pulled him back down by his nape, kissing him more deeply, “I know you will, my darling.” He leaned back in his chair, appraising Will frankly, “I like seeing you so happy and excited.”

“Come with me?”

“Of course, mano širdie. Do you know where the shelter is?”

Will went back to his study and grabbed his tablet, showing Hannibal the screen with three places pinpointed on it, “there’s three, Fundacion Ecoanimalista Venezuela, Serpentario and Fundación Santuario Luna.”

They found her at Fundación Santuario Luna, a little miniature poodle, undernourished, mistreated and only six months old, shivering in a corner of a cage with several other equally emaciated dogs. Will had noticed her immediately, crouching down and crooning to her softly, hand extended with a crumbled treat in hand to entice her. He gazed up at Hannibal when she came forward slowly, crawling on her belly to sniff at his fingers before gingerly taking the offering. Her curly fur was matted and in desperate need of a clipping back, her colour likely a chocolate brown that matched her dark eyes.

“She is shy and sweet,” one of the staff informed them.

Will could almost see Hannibal thinking the same thing about him and it made him grin.

"I'd take them all, but I like her," he told Hannibal. "Poodles shed less than other breeds and they're very intelligent, easy to train."

Hannibal crouched down beside Will, "with a good bath and feeding she could be lovely. Her curls would remind me of yours." The little poodle watched Hannibal warily, but was still enticed by the treats in Will's open palm. *"Has she been vaccinated?"* he asked the staff member still hovering near them, sensing an adoption.

"Si," the staff member nodded enthusiastically. *"And neutered, all her shots. She would need to be groomed and clipped at least every six to eight weeks to keep her coat from matting. Unfortunately we do not have the capacity to do it so often."* He spread his hands apologetically, indicating the abundance of canines in cages around them.

Will named her Nessa, after one of Tolkien's Goddesses as she was so swift when she darted about their back yard chasing the balls he threw for her. When he informed Hannibal of her name, the man tipped his head and greeted Nessa cordially as he would any exalted lady. She was eager to please, learning to sit and stay in just a few lessons, lapping up Will's praise almost as eagerly as she inhaled her treats.

It took her a week to really settle and accept that she had regular meals and wouldn't be kicked for the smallest infraction. Will was utterly delighted when he came into the kitchen one evening to find her sitting placidly by Hannibal's feet as he prepared their meal. He was even more delighted when he spotted Hannibal dropping a piece of meat and Nessa snapped it up, wriggling at his feet.

"You're spoiling her," Will said as he rounded the stupidly large kitchen island, leaning over to see what they were going to be eating. Pasta evidently. Surprisingly pedestrian. Even if Hannibal had made the pasta from scratch.

"Nessa deserves a little spoiling," Hannibal replied mildly as he plated their meal. Nessa trotted off to her bed, purchased by Hannibal the first day they had her, curling up to watch in comfort as they headed to the dinning room. The doctor poured the wine as Will settled in his seat beside Hannibal's. "So do you," he added as he placed Will's glass by his plate and depositing a kiss to his curls.

With a derisive scoff, Will raised a brow at the man beside him, "I feel like I am becoming a trophy husband."

Hannibal almost, *almost*, snorted into his wine.

They ate in companionable silence, taking comfort in one another's company. Will glanced to the wall behind Hannibal, eyes alighting on the sketch the man had framed and hung. Achilles and Patroclus. It was a running theme through Hannibal's artwork. Always with Patroclus wearing Will's face. He smiled at the sharp cheekbones on the figure of Achilles,

face almost completely turned away, but he could still see it was Hannibal laying over the prone figure of Will as Patroclus.

Two men torn apart only by divine intervention.

Another two men sitting close, held together by what felt like divine intervention.

"Divine intervention didn't pull us apart," Will murmured, eyes shifting to Hannibal's.

The cannibal's lips twisted into a smile, his eyes locked with Will's, fond, adoring. "I am certain that divinity was involved in our rebirth." He raised his glass to his lips, inhaling delicately before he took a sip. "Achilles was considered divine, and his grief at the loss of Patroclus was extraordinary. I find our positions are reversed."

Will raised a brow at Hannibal, "you consider me divine?"

"Radiant, ethereal, a cherubic visage that hides devilish intent." Hannibal paused at the amused smirk he received. "Utterly beautiful."

A cherub with devilish intent. *Ha!*

"Lucifer was the most beautiful being in creation, before he fell."

Hannibal's grin widened, "I would argue he was even more beautiful after." Toying with his wine glass, the doctor reclined in his chair, "in the St. Paul Cathédrale de Liège, there is a marble statue of Lucifer, called the *Le génie du mal,* or the Genius of Evil. It was carved by Belgian sculptor Guillaume Geefs in 1848. It depicts the Lightbringer as a tortured, stunningly beautiful man, yet it is a replacement for a statue carved by his brother, Joseph, a few years prior called the *L'ange du mal*, or the Angel of Evil, that was considered too beautiful and it was thought it would corrupt the youths of the church. A comparison of the two would lead most to conclude that Guillaume went further than Joseph in his depiction as Lucifer as beautiful, indeed many have mistaken him for one of the Saints until one notices the bitten apple at his feet, the half hidden horns, his clawed toes and the bat wings that curve around his back." Amber eyes twinkled at Will, "his curls remind me of yours."

Will smirked right back at Hannibal over the rim of his glass, "then perhaps I should use his name instead of Oliver. Or one of the derivatives, like Lucian."

Hannibal's answering smile was sharp, showing off his slightly crooked teeth, "there is nothing derivative about you, mielasis."

For lack of a better word, Hannibal was acting twitchy. He noticed it immediately when he came home from a fishing jaunt with Nessa in tow to find Hannibal pacing in the back garden. The emergency suitcase hadn't been sitting in the foyer so Will was fairly sure they hadn't been discovered, but something was obviously bothering the older man. Hannibal did not pace. Even if said pacing was still elegant and fluid in a way that seemed inherent to how Hannibal moved.

All languid grace.

He watched from the patio for several minutes, growing more and more concerned as Hannibal had not yet noted his presence.

He always knew when Will was in his proximity, almost preternatural in his ability to sense when Will was close. It was unnerving to not have Hannibal's gaze on him. He discovered he didn't like it. When Hannibal finally became aware of him, he stopped pacing, back to Will, so unnaturally still. It made the hair on the back of his neck rise.

Hannibal turned slowly, hands clasped behind his back, mask firmly in place and Will took a step back.

The fragile peace and tranquility of their existence felt like it was shattering like a teacup, shards of delicate porcelain flying in every direction. Just as Will was sinking into life with his cannibal, something was threatening it. He bared his teeth, snarling and Hannibal's mask dropped.

Will's eyes widened at the blatant confusion and anticipation of pain in Hannibal's eyes.

Without another thought, Will strode across the lawn and stopped right in front of the older man, wishing to comfort, not knowing how or why he needed to.

"Hannibal?"

The doctor visibly flinched, turning his head, hiding his gaze from Will's far too perceptive scrutiny, yet not removing himself from it entirely. Will was grateful for that, all too aware that Hannibal could have slipped into his mind palace and shut himself away completely.

"Will…"

It was Will that flinched this time, the ground beneath his feet unsteady. Hannibal had hardly used his name since adopting more intimate forms of address. Whatever it was had Hannibal reverting to calling him by name. That indicated that it was something to do with their relationship, or something Hannibal perceived to be so. That could be dangerous.

"Am I on the menu?"

That got a visceral reaction from Hannibal, his hand coming up to cup Will's cheek, as tenderly as ever. "No, never." Will felt his fingers trembling, unnerving him further.

"We haven't been found, the bag wasn't by the door."

A tiny hint of a smile ghosted over Hannibal's lips, gone fleetingly. "No, the FBI is still working under the assumption that we died, although I am sure Uncle Jack is still searching."

"Hannibal, you look like a man who is desperately clinging to something he thinks he's going to lose." He paused to take in the sharp inhale that brought him, the way Hannibal's lips twisted in a grimace as if he'd swallowed something exceedingly sour and unpalatable. "You're not losing me. What has you so…frightened? I don't like seeing you like this." He

then employed the most effective weapon in his arsenal, staring deep into Hannibal's eyes, not above a slight fluttering of lashes. "Tell me."

The older man groaned at the blatant manipulation, "cunning boy." His large hands tangled in Will's hair, dipping his head quickly to claim his lips in a bruising, urgent kiss that stole Will's breath. His tongue found Will's, curling around it, licking in to taste. Then he abruptly wrenched his mouth away with a gasp, his forehead to Will's, breathing heavily. "Come, I would rather not say the words and have you associate me with the knowledge." He took Will's hand and led him to the living room, his tablet on the coffee table. He sat, slowly, gracefully, yet holding himself carefully as he gestured to the tablet, "the page should still be open."

Will glanced at him, then down at the device before scooping it up and turning the screen back on, keenly aware of Hannibal's intent gaze on his cheek.

It wasn't the Tattlecrime banner, nor Freddie Loundes' byline that caught his eye first. It was the picture of Molly, colour high on her cheeks with her anger. He stared at it in shock, then scanned the article.

"Oh," he whispered. Flat, devoid of emotion. He twisted the onyx band on his finger, remembering the gold that had sat there previously. He wondered briefly if it was still on the bathroom counter at the house on the cliff. Highly unlikely. Particularly considering the evidence he held in his hands.

Resolute in his silence, Hannibal remained beside him as he read how Molly had petitioned for divorce, in absentia, citing irreconcilable differences, abandonment. He sighed, he supposed that was true. He never could have stayed with her, nor could he have gone back to her. Not with the knowledge of what he'd done and that was well before the dive off the cliff. Now, well…

He placed the tablet back on the coffee table, not bothering to read any further, mostly disinclined to read Freddie's particular brand of spiteful rhetoric. He surmised that Molly had been advised in some capacity, and it certainly wouldn't have been fair for her to wait years for him to be legally declared dead. So divorce was the only viable option for her really.

He sighed, at least she hadn't added infidelity to the divorce petition. Not that he and Hannibal had been physical in a sexual sense, either then or now. *Yet*, his brain supplied and he flushed. There had certainly been an emotional connection between the two of them, something than ran far deeper than what he and Molly had. If it hadn't he wouldn't be sitting with Hannibal in Venezuela.

Hannibal remained silent, waiting for Will to speak.

He examined his feelings cautiously, prodding at them like one would at a newly formed bruise, waiting for pain to flare at the touch. There was none. He cared about her, wanted her to be happy, but he wasn't particularly saddened by the end of his already doomed marriage. She was better off now, would be able to find someone better for her, someone suitable. He was happy where he was.

Reaching out blindly, he found Hannibal's hand and laced their fingers together, enjoying the size of the man's hand against his own. It felt right. The band on Hannibal's finger pressing into his fingers, comforting, grounding.

This was a teacup that he could put back together.

Will gave Hannibal a wry smile, "so, I'm divorced."

Hannibal blinked. Once. His lips parted, exhaling slowly. "Yes." Wary of the flippancy in Will's tone. "I was not expecting this reaction."

Will rolled his eyes, "fuck, Hannibal, it was already over, you even said as much to me yourself when I went to visit you. It was a foregone conclusion." He leaned against the other man's shoulder, "I get that you were expecting me to be upset, maybe even blame you, but it wasn't your fault, it was mine. I never should have married her. A clutch for balance."

Hannibal finally relaxed, pulling Will close to embrace him, running his cheek over Will' curls. "I apologise for doubting you, mano širdie. Being vulnerable is not something I am used to. Nor is being insecure. I will adjust."

Will shrugged, "you're used to being in control in a relationship. I get it, darlin'." He cringed as Hannibal stiffened at the endearment, clearly rather shocked. Will was shocked himself, it had just slipped out. He'd become so used to the casual way Hannibal dripped endearments in his ear, even if didn't completely understand them, he felt the sincerity behind the foreign words. To return the sentiment was right, but still felt odd on his tongue.

Sensing how awkward Will felt, Hannibal didn't mention it. But he did hold Will a little tighter with a sigh of satisfaction that seeped into Will's bones.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will could have gone to Hannibal's room that night, but the idea seemed gauche to him. He wanted things to happen naturally, for him to feel so much desire it couldn't be contained. And he could feel it building, itching under his skin every time they kissed, particularly of a night as they parted to go to their respective rooms. He'd never experienced kisses like the ones they indulged in, not just because it was a man he was kissing, but because Hannibal's emotions bled into each and every press of lips, or dance of tongues. They were passionate and erotic, hedonistic even when they were sweet and not ravenous. Every kiss mattered in a way no other had matter before. But he still maintained a gentlemanly poise, never letting their groins come into contact, pulling away, just as breathless as Will when it became overtly heated.

While Will understood why Hannibal was holding back, appreciated the considerate nature of his hesitance, it was becoming unbearable to not be touched in the way he'd begun to desire so desperately. Hannibal was letting him dictate the pace, so it was up to Will to change the status quo.

He wasn't entirely sure how to do that, nor how far he was willing to take things. Eventually, he knew where it would lead, but at that point in time, he simply wanted Hannibal's hands on him.

Three weeks or so after Will found out about his divorce, Hannibal kissed him goodnight at his door, moaning softly as Will ran his hands up and down the man's back, momentarily giving into Will's tongue insistent against his own. It turns ferocious for brief moment, then Hannibal wrenches away with a pained gasp, putting distance between them. Will looked down, saw how aroused he was and stalked forward, Hannibal's eyes dilated and dark as he watched him approach.

He gripped Hannibal by his nape, "I *want*, Hannibal. Not just the wanting to want." He breathed deep, scenting the lighting strike of need that zapped through Hannibal. "I *want* you. However that looks, I want to move towards consummation."

Hannibal growled, capturing Will's mouth with his, invading and consuming. "Yes," he hissed against Will's lips, breathing him in.

Will broke the kiss this time, "promise it is not the thrill of the chase, that you won't pull your mask back down once you have me."

"Never." Fervent, worshipful. "I will never have enough of you. I need you more than I will ever need anything else."

“Then consume me,” he whispered.

When Hannibal growled again, it was thoroughly and utterly feral, the beast lurking just under the veneer of a man driven mad by lust and desire. He inhaled deeply, nosing at the junction of Will’s neck and shoulder, “I feel that I may be the one consumed, mylimasis.”

Beloved. The endearment made him feel warmer than he already was, and gave him another clue to the one phrase Hannibal wouldn’t translate for him when he asked. Not that he really needed it. He had a feeling he might just get the answer out of Hannibal tonight. And give a response of his own, practising the words in his head. He toyed with the top button on Hannibal’s shirt, slipping it open, “could we consume one another?” Adding a flirtatious, coy little glance for emphasis.

In the dim light of the hallway, Hannibal’s eyes were more their true maroon than the honeyed tones they took on in sunlight, fixed on Will with a softness that belied the way he spun Will to press him against the wall. They slipped shut when Will’s finger slid another button free and traced the exposed skin.

Hannibal didn’t ask if Will was sure, only sliding his hands down to cup his ass and pull their groins together with a forceful roll of slim hips, moaning as he felt a corresponding hardness against his own. That was apparently all the answer he needed. One hand left Will’s ass and fumbled at the doorknob, his mouth never leaving the younger man’s as he herded them through the door and into Hannibal’s inner sanctum. The door slammed shut with a kick of Hannibal’s foot and they almost danced their way to the large bed.

Before Hannibal could push him down on it, Will halted him with a hand to his chest, peering up him. Hannibal Lecter was a beast, fire beneath a carefully crafted person suit. Being around him was like holding a hand to flame, and Will had never desired something so much as he wanted to put his hand right in that inferno and burn. He pried apart another button from its mooring, letting his fingers ghost through Hannibal’s chest hair, marveling at the sheer male feel of him.

“I want to do this,” he murmured, another button giving way to his ministrations before he tugged at the shirt to free it from Hannibal’s pants. “I want to bare you to my gaze and savour it.” He leaned forward and kissed the skin he’d exposed, smiling as Hannibal gasped softly. “I want to *taste* you.”

Hannibal’s head tipped back, his mouth open as Will made his way down, finally parting the fabric of his shirt completely, sinking his hands into Will’s hair. He glanced back down at Will as he sank to his knees, eyes blowing wide as he registered rather belatedly what Will intended. His mouth opened, rounding into an ‘o’ of surprise as Will’s fingers found his belt.

Will smirked as Hannibal frowned in consternation when he slid the belt free then ignored the zipper, instead working on Hannibal’s socks. Hannibal lifted his feet obediently, letting Will slide the fabric off his feet, then moaned again as Will leaned down and pressed kissed to the bared tops.

“Every touch…” he began, trailing off into a satisfied but shaky sigh. "Mielasis."

Will rose back into his previous position, hands at Hannibal's waist, leaning into inhale. "I know," he said quietly. He rubbed his cheeks and lips over the prominent bulge in Hannibal's slacks, humming softly. Gently, so very gently, he eased the button open, then tugged the zipper down, Hannibal's eyes never leaving his face. Hooking his thumbs in the waistband, Will coaxed them down Hannibal's thighs, kissing both scars he found, one from Jack, one from Francis. Under the tails of Hannibal's shirt he could see a pair of black boxer briefs, soft cotton.

Hannibal tilted his head, amused by Will's wry expression, "mano širdie?"

Will snickered, "I was kind of expecting silk."

With a deep sigh, Hannibal shook his head. "Silk is not the best in a humid environment. Cotton breathes and does not trap the heat." He gave Will a mildly annoyed glance, "this is not particularly erotic conversation, mano širdie."

Will decided that the only way to progress without devolving into an asinine conversation was to tug Hannibal's underwear down his thighs. It was extraordinarily effective, Hannibal inhaling sharply as he kicked away the offending garment and Will nuzzled his face in the older man's crotch. It was all so new to him, the feel of Hannibal, a man, beneath his fingers and lips. He'd never encountered a man's genitalia at such close quarters, let alone one that was uncut. He wasn't scared, hesitant perhaps because of a lack of experience. Hesitant due to not quite knowing what to do.

Despite the lack of erotic conversation, Hannibal was very obviously aroused, the head of his cock flushed red, a pearl of pre-come beading at the tip as it emerged from the foreskin. He placed his hands firmly on Hannibal's sharp hip bones and leaned in to lap at it, to taste Hannibal in this capacity for the first time, to taste any man in this capacity for the first time. He drew his tongue back into his mouth, assessing the taste. Bitter slightly, not terribly so, and not something he found distasteful. He could become accustomed to it.

Hannibal inhaled shakily as he flicked his tongue out again, swirling it around the head. His fingers buried in Will's hair, eyes intent on his face to watch his reactions. When Will encased the head of Hannibal's cock in his mouth, pushing at the foreskin with his tongue, Hannibal moaned unabashedly, fingers tightening in his curls.

The reaction encouraged further exploration, Will's tongue flicking and swirling around the crown, then down to map out the veins along the shaft. He felt Hannibal swell more against his tongue, twitch slightly. Gratified by that, Will continued with his inexperienced ministrations to Hannibal's cock, using only what he had learned from being on the receiving end so rarely as his guide. Hannibal shuddered as Will began to suckle, hollowing his cheeks as he descended further. When he inadvertently scraped his teeth along the shaft, Hannibal hissed, thrusting deeper into his mouth, chasing the sensation.

"Oh, *oh*," Hannibal moaned, careful not to thrust again, letting Will suckle as he wished. He was just getting into a rhythm when Hannibal hauled him to his feet and kissed him soundly. "I…that…Will…" the doctor muttered, sounding utterly helpless. He fumbled with the hem of Will's shirt then pulled it off over his head. Both men moaned when flesh met flesh, their chests hard against one another, Hannibal's hands unceasing in their task of

mapping Will's skin. "You were about to bring about a premature ending to tonight, my darling." He bent his head to nip at Will's shoulder, "I wish to taste you too, and explore other things, should you so desire." His hands went to the waistband of Will's shorts, prying open the button, pulling down the zipper. As the remainder of Will's clothing hit the floor, Hannibal urged him back to the bed, guiding him down until he was splayed out on the bedding.

"C'mere," Will whispered when Hannibal spent long moments just staring down at him. He raised his hand and Hannibal crawled over him, leaning down to kiss Will's cheek, then his jaw, lips dragging over the taut line of his throat. He stayed poised over him until Will's hand curled around his nape and pulled him down.

Letting out what sounded suspiciously like a curse, Hannibal let his body lay completely over Will's, his kiss passionate and unrestrained, tongue tangling with Will's, desperate, hungry. He gave a tentative roll of his hips, grinding them together and Will let his thighs part to let Hannibal lay between them, making the friction even better.

Tossing his head back, Hannibal growled when Will latched onto his throat, teeth nibbling down to the dip at the base, then over the jugular vein. Will opened his mouth wider and let his teeth sink into the tender flesh, not quite enough to rip at the skin, but certainly enough to leave a nasty bruise. He felt Hannibal shudder above him, his hips rolling furiously, leaning on one elbow so that he could cup Will's head in his hand and urge him on. Felt Hannibal's normally steady pulse thundering and galloping beneath his tongue.

Will sucked and licked at the indentations of his teeth, "mmm, you liked that?"

A self depreciating laugh from Hannibal, then another delicious roll of his hips, "yes. Very much so." His voice was a quiet murmur as Will licked at the bite again. "I wished to take my time with you, but now…" The shift of his body over Will's was abrupt, his lips and teeth latching onto the skin of his collarbone, then down to a nipple.

A retaliatory bite.

Will arched, back bowing off the bed, mouth hanging open, hands diving into Hannibal's hair to hold him in place. "Yes, more, Hannibal, please."

Hannibal devoted himself to Will's plea, mouth hot as he trailed down, down to his groin. Will arched again when Hannibal's mouth enclosed the head of his cock, his lover's hum sending delicious vibrations through to his spine. Hannibal's hands were never still, caressing his sides, his thighs, then up to his nipples to pinch, then linking his hands with Will's when the pleasure threatened to overwhelm him.

When Will begged him for more, Hannibal let him go with a slick sound, licking red swollen lips as he took in what he had wrought. "More?" he rasped, voice husky and low.

"All of it, everything. Please." Will looked him in the eyes, direct, unwavering, "I want you inside me."

Hannibal growled, lurching to the side, wrenching his bedside drawer open. A bottle of lubricant thudded by Will's hip before he found himself flipped over onto all fours.

The click of a cap, a squelch and then Hannibal began preparing him.

Giving himself in to the sensation of Hannibal's fingers penetrating him, opening him, Will noted idly how gentle the doctor was being. Treating him like delicate, translucent fine bone china. Will didn't consider himself in those terms, he felt he was more likely to be akin to tupperwear. The entirely random though made him snort, even as he realised he was likely somewhere in between the two extremes.

"I'm not china, darlin'. You don't have to be so careful."

Hannibal leaned down to press a kiss right between the dimples above his derriere. "You may not be as delicate as fine china, but you are infinitely more precious to me, mažiau." Another kiss accompanied a crooking of Hannibal's fingers, pressing directly into his prostate.

Will saw stars. "Oh, shit," he groaned, head dipping down between his shoulders as he struggled to remain upright and not collapse into the sheets. He clenched his fists into the fabric to ground himself and tilted his hips to seek more.

The salacious behavior earned him a dark little chuckle from the man currently driving him insane with desire.

It wasn't long before Hannibal became impatient, flipping Will onto his back again and grabbing wildly for the lubricant to slick himself. Will watched avariciously, licking his lips. He wasn't the least bit nervous, far too turned on for it to worm into his brain. He watched the way Hannibal's eyes glinted, fixed on him as his hand slid over his shaft.

"For the sake of comfort and ease, I should have left you on your knees, however, I am greedy for your expressions," Hannibal murmured as he leaned over him, lining up.

Will gasped, not only from the intensity of Hannibal breaching him, but the absolute mess of emotions rolling off the man would have floored him had he not already been prone. Adoration, lust, infatuation, reverence, more than a little wide eyed wonder that the beautiful creature beneath him was *his*, and the barest trace of smug satisfaction as he sheathed himself to the hilt, drinking in Will's moan as he did so.

"Nepakartojama," Hannibal muttered as he pulled back so that the head of his cock snagged against Will's rim before he slid back in. Hands clasping slim hips, Hannibal rocked in and out of him, groaning with each delicious thrust. He buried his face in Will's neck, nipping at the skin, "so wonderfully tight around me."

Will clutched at Hannibal's back, clinging like a limpet, so full of Hannibal, his own cock brushing with each thrust over Hannibal's taut stomach. It felt amazing. He shouted hoarsely as Hannibal adjusted his angle of penetration and started jabbing into his prostate mercilessly.

Hannibal leaned back, hands leaving Will's hips in favour of his hands, their eyes locked on one another as he continued the onslaught, a slow drag out, forceful thrust back in. Maroon eyes flitted down to Will's cock leaking copiously against his stomach, then back up to watch in wonder as Will threw his head back, arching and tilting his hips to meet him.

"Fuck! Hannibal!"

Crashing back down, Hannibal sped up, pinning him to the bed, his voice a rough rasp in Will's ear, groaning as Will's legs wrapped around his waist. "Mine," he snarled, the motion of his hips becoming brutal, the slap of flesh echoing through the room. "You are *mine*."

It was Hannibal's lust laden growl that set him off, clamping down on the cock inside him, nails scrabbling down Hannibal's back, head tossed back as he felt the coiling in his stomach release, hot spurts of his come decorating both their bellies. Hannibal growled again, thrusting into him harder, his hips stuttering, then one last harsh thrust and Will felt the pulse and warmth of his lover's release filling him.

Hannibal's mouth sought Will's, both of them panting into each other rather than truly kissing, until Hannibal softened and withdrew.

A warm hand caressed Will's scarred cheek gently, "did I hurt you?"

Shaking his head in the negative, Will placed his own hand over Hannibal's larger one, "no, you didn't. It was perfect." Assessing himself, Will felt a dull throbbing ache in his ass, but it was…almost a pleasant feeling, a reminder.

Hannibal eased himself off to the side, pressing a kiss to Will's shoulder, "I had hoped to maintain a little more control."

Will laughed, "and I'm glad you didn't. Really, darlin', that was amazing."

"Come, a quick shower to clean up," Hannibal said, pulling him upright.

The shower was both heavenly and ridiculous. Hannibal's hands on him, soaping him and then caressing his clean skin was wonderful, the warm water soothing his aching muscles. Ridiculous due to the nature of the shower itself. The one in Will's room was relatively normal, a simple tiled cubicle, Hannibal's was a marble and waterfall head monstrosity.

"Thirsty man drinking from a well of sweet water," Will said softly when they had dried off and laid back in Hannibal's bed. Or perhaps, it was *their* bed now. He could hardly see the doctor agreeing to move into Will's smaller room. After what they had just shared, he doubted they would ever sleep apart again.

"It has been some time," Hannibal admitted, immediately understanding what Will was referring to.

Will hummed, doing a mental calculation. They had been on the run for almost nine months, Hannibal had been incarcerated for three years before that. Three years and nine months without sexual contact, without intimate touch. "How long?" he asked quietly.

"Four years."

Will raised his head. That meant that he had slept with Bedelia, but not for the last months of his sojourn in Florence. He frowned, "what?"

Hannibal sighed, running his fingers through Will's curls distractedly. "I had sexual relations with…*her* just the once. More curiosity on my part, I found it less than satisfactory. She was not who I wanted."

Oh. Will stomach churned with guilt. He should have gone with Hannibal when he had the chance.

Hannibal gazed down at him, tipping his face up so their eyes could meet, "don't, mano meile. We are here now. That is what matters. Sexual gratification has never been high on my list of priorities, until you. I have had many periods of celibacy in my life."

"Hmm." Will maintain their eye contact, "I…I've been the same, but with you it's…" He paused, searching for the right expression to what he felt. "I have been anticipating it, excited in a way I've never been. Arousal is difficult when you can't let yourself delve too deeply, can't let someone in. Sex before was overwhelming in all the wrongs ways. A sigh could mean satisfaction or dissatisfaction, distracting from something that is meant to be pleasurable." He arched up to kiss Hannibal gently, "but not with you. I was nervous, but I got lost in the feeling, the intensity of it. Before, I could never be sure that I wanted it because *I* wanted it, or because they did. And yes, I felt that with you, but I could also feel my own desire, had been feeling it before we even stepped into this room."

Silence reigned in the room for a long moment and Will could feel the cogs of Hannibal's brain churning.

"You're thinking," Will said into Hannibal's neck.

Hannibal hummed softly as he ran his fingers through Will's curls, "I was just contemplating the shortcomings of the English language."

Will looked at up him incredulously, "that's rather too academic for pillow talk."

"There is method to my madness," he quipped back. "Many languages have words that simply cannot be translated easily one to one into English. It's rather blunted, or perhaps direct might be a better term. One word in another language can convey a whole concept, a state of being, or a complex emotion that English cannot in the same way."

"Schadenfreude," Will murmured.

Hannibal hummed in agreement, "the pleasure derived by someone from another person's misfortune, yes. That is one phrase that English cannot completely encompass." He glanced down at Will thoughtfully. "As an example in my native tongue, neprieinamas."

"Neprieinamas," Will repeated, tasting the word on his tongue.

"In English, it would translate to unreachable, perhaps, but that does not convey the emphasis or the power of the impossibility of being with the one you love. It does not convey the hopelessness, the agony of it in the same way."

Will rubbed his cheek over Hannibal's shoulder, now seeing where his partner was heading with his musings, "that was how you thought of me."

"It was." He paused, dropping a kiss to Will's curls. "Lithuanians are a passionate people and the language reflects that passion. While I was tempered by other cultures, I am still a child of my parents and influenced by my original home. Culturally and linguistically, when expressing how we feel, Lithuanians have much in common with the Japanese. To express love is done in many ways, but rarely in words, or rather, not in particular words. To say it outright is rare and cherished when it is said. I have found that Americans especially throw the words away. You do not, I do not. I have never said it to a lover, not in any language. It is not that I thought myself incapable of the emotion, rather that it had been so long since I felt it that I wasn't sure I had it left within me to do so. You reminded me of what Mischa had brought out in me so easily."

Will leaned up on his elbow to look at Hannibal properly, "you have said it. You didn't tell me what it means, but I could see it was what you meant. I could feel it from you. And I feel it too, aš tave myliu, Hannibal."

Hannibal stilled, then rolled Will onto his back and loomed over him, searching his eyes, "you mean that, don't you, širdele?"

Will reached up and stroked his sharp cheekbones, "I do, all of you, even the parts of you that piss me off, I still love them. I *love* you."

Hannibal swooped down and kissed him, leaning his forehead to Will's, "I love you, Will, aš taip pat myliu tave."

Chapter End Notes

Some of the Lithuanian phrases used by Hannibal. The full list will be added later.
Mano širdis: - literally "my heart" [when directly addressing a person: "mano širdie"].
Dievinu: expresses the feeling of something that exceeds perfect, adoration
Aš tave myliu: I love you, very uncommonly said
Aš taip pat myliu tave: I love you too
Laukiu nesulaukiu: I wait, and I cannot wait
Mylimasis - basically "beloved".
Mano meilė [when directly addressing a person: mano meile] - very literally "my love"
Mielasis - literally "cute/lovely/dear", but in essence close to "honey/sweetheart".

Mažius/mažiukas/mažasis [when directly addressing a person: mažiau/mažiuk/mažasis] - literally “the little one”, but could be approximated to “baby/babe”, however, more on the cute side without sexual connotations.
Širdelė [when directly addressing a person: širdele] - literally “little heart”, but in essence close to “sweetheart”
Neprieinamas: When someone tries really hard to seduce another, to no avail, Lithuanians would say they were neprieinama. It has a similar meaning to the English word unreachable, but it carries more power and emphasis on how impossible it is to end up with a person you love.
Nepakartojama: Lithuanians use this word to describe a perfect situation which will never happen again. The word literally translates to ‘unable to repeat.’ For example, if someone said šis vakaras buvo nepakartojama, it would mean something along the lines of ‘this evening was beyond incredible’.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As much as Hannibal was a possessive lover, it was rather a shock for Will to discover he was just as, if not more so than Hannibal. It was almost a year before they truly began to venture out in their new guises, by that time Hannibal was virtually chafing at the bit to get out and about, even if it was just dinner. Seeing his partner dressed in a suit again, albeit a much simpler version of his artfully tailored bespoke suits in Baltimore, did things to Will. Hannibal's suit was black with a subtle silver pinstripe, his shirt a deep green to match Will's own suit, something Will had rolled his eyes at. Hannibal did so like to announce that they were a pair. Even if the covetous eyes around them as they stepped in to the restaurant ignored that fact.

Will bristled as he noted far too many eager eyes dragging over Hannibal's trim form, entirely oblivious to the ones directed his way. He squeezed Hannibal's hand tighter in his own, glaring at his shoes.

Hannibal flicked his eyes down to Will, scowling slightly at Will's change in mood. He leaned close, lips brushing his ear, "you look ravishing, mano širdie. Truly delectable." He rubbed his thumb over Will's wedding band, then brought his hand to his mouth to deliver a kiss to his knuckles and Will relaxed a little.

He turned blue eyes up to Hannibal, "and you look good enough to eat, darlin'. As always." He smirked as Hannibal's eyes darkened, his tongue slipping out to touch the centre of his top lip. A tell if Hannibal ever had one. It meant he was considering, this time what he would do to Will once they returned home. A delicious prospect that had Will stirring in his suit pants.

It was almost enough for Will to forget the avaricious gazes trained on Hannibal. Most of the other diners had forgone their appraisal in favour of their meals, yet there was one man, similar in age to Hannibal himself if Will had to judge. And he was judging, finding the man wanting in every way. He could never hope to hold Hannibal's attention longer than it would take a knife to slide over his throat. His staring was rude. His clothing ill fitting, his hair far too dark on a man his age. Vain, but not worth the vanity.

The man sent a smarmy flirtatious wink in Hannibal's direction when the older man noted where Will was glaring. Hannibal merely turned his back without acknowledging the salvo and held out Will's chair for him, dipping down to kiss Will's cheek.

"Are you hunting, mangustėli?" Hannibal asked as he seated himself across from Will.

Huffing, Will returned the lazy smile his lover gave him. "Isn't that was a mongoose is for?" he retorted blandly.

Hannibal grinned, delighted. His hand slid across the table to find Will's, "will I be joining you?"

Regarding Hannibal carefully, he noted the barely disguised excitement, could almost taste the lust rolling off him. "The idea turn you on?" He knew the answer, could see the way Hannibal's nostrils flared, his eyes a deep maroon, lips parting to exhale. "Deviant," he teased. He got an enigmatic smile in response, feeling Hannibal's foot rub over his ankle.

"This is turning into something of a celebratory dinner, mano širdie."

Will laughed, then called for one of the wait staff, "a bottle of Bâtard-Montrachet if you have it." The young woman bobbed her head and hurried away.

Hannibal's eyes gleamed at him over the table, "now you are spoiling me, I feel almost giddy." His foot traveled up Will's calf languidly. "What have I done to deserve such bounty, hmm?"

"You been patient, brangusis," Will drawled, using the Lithuanian word for darling, knowing it pleased Hannibal immensely to hear him using the language. He could already read it, eidetic memory and all, but pronunciation still got him when speaking it sometimes, something Hannibal delighted in correcting. Adding to his Spanish and Cajun French, it felt nice to be able to converse with Hannibal in his own language and the doctor assured him it would assist him if he needed to learn Polish or Russian. "You've let me dictate the pace since the Dragon. In everything. I'm starting to feel settled in my own skin for the first time in my life. I'm no longer agonising over how I have changed and I no longer resent you for being the catalyst for that change. I thank you for it."

Hannibal's fingers laced with his, "it's all I ever wanted for you, mano širdie. To see you free of the chains society had placed on you. No more persuasion, only admiration. You choose, Will, whatever and however you need to do things." He lifted Will's hand to his lips, letting his breath ghost over his knuckles before he kissed them delicately, but Will felt his tongue slide over them, then watched the pink of it slip back into his mouth. "I will ever be your most ardent worshiper, širdele."

"Mmm, you truly mean that, don't you?" Will mused, cocking his head to one side and peering at him through his lashes.

"Aš rimtai," Hannibal confirmed with a murmur, kissing his knuckles again, eyes burning as he gazed at Will across the table.

Will watched as Hannibal stepped through the door, tall and graceful, ready to wait with Will for the valet service to bring their car around. Shrugging into his coat he paused as the man who had ogled Hannibal stepped up to him, handing him a business card, stroking his arm coquettishly before he was gone into the night with a waggle of his fingers.

Will snarled as he pushed through the restaurant door and stalked to Hannibal, eyes fixed on the man's back as he sauntered away.

"Intelekto nesužalotu veidu," his lover muttered and Will had a feeling it was something derogatory from the tone and vehemence. Hannibal handed him the business card without a word. Will pocketed it without giving it so much as a glance.

Plenty of time for that later.

The benefit of being a former special agent of the FBI was that Will was intimately aware of what *not* to do, what *not* to leave behind. How to twist the scene he left behind to resemble something other than what it was. How to skew the evidence.

That didn't mean he was tidy about it. In fact he was down right messy. Normally the overt violence of the scene would indicate that there was passion behind it, but Will only felt passion for the kill itself, not the object of his directed rage. His natural abrasiveness exacerbated to the point of murderous intent and reality.

Hannibal had watched with a rapt expression, awed by the ferocity of his boy, too enamoured to even join in, content to let Will have his kill. Observing, not participating. Hannibal could be just as unfettered as Will, that was evidenced by the way he'd torn out Francis' throat with his own teeth, but usually he was calculated and clinical. The way he had broken Mason Verger's neck, with a calculated precise twist was evidence of that. Will, on the other hand, was barely contained fury and rage, ripping and tearing with his hands, teeth. Retribution.

When he stood panting harshly from exertion, it was Hannibal's touch to his blood coated face that brought him back to the present, the warmth of Hannibal's palm against his sticky cheek.

"That was glorious," the older man whispered reverently.

Will laughed, softly, "I made a mess. I was feeling a little bitchy."

Amber hued eyes twinkled in amusement. "Yes, and it was beautiful to watch, mano širdie." Hannibal's thumb swept across his lips, then he dove down and licked into his mouth, heedless of the blood, or perhaps enjoying it. When the doctor pulled away, blood smeared his mouth. He held up a bag, "I have collected a few things of value, adding to the muddying of the waters. With the delightful mess you have made, the authorities will have a difficult time with motive - when they get around to investigating."

Will snorted as he shrugged off his plain black t-shirt, handing it off to Hannibal. The doctor passed him a clean shirt, then a pair of pants to change into, all his bloodied clothing stuffed into a bag for incineration later.

Before Will could button up the clean trousers, Hannibal dropped to his knees in front of him, nuzzling at his crotch lewdly. Then his underwear was shoved down, and Hannibal's mouth enclosed the tip of his cock. He glanced down, tangling his hands in soft silvered strands, groaning as the blood that had transferred from his mouth to Hannibal's was now smearing around his length.

"Fuck, your mouth," he moaned as Hannibal sucked him down to the root, burying his nose in trimmed pubic hair, his tongue caressing the underside. Hannibal's fingers dug into his hips, his mouth working with feverish intent, Will tipping his head back for a moment to simply *feel*. It was glorious, but it was infinitely better to see those plush lips wrapped around him, maroon eyes reverently gazing up at him. He looked as if he were performing a benediction.

He was stunningly beautiful on his knees before Will, debauched and salacious as he kept up his ministrations. Will curled his hands around the back of Hannibal's head, holding him still, noting the pleased gleam that met his own gaze as he began to use his mouth. Hannibal increased the suction as Will's hips moved back and forth, purposeful in his thrusts as he felt a familiar coiling in his stomach, the tightening of approaching orgasm.

Hannibal's lashes fluttered as Will released into his throat with a harsh grunt, his legs trembling as he was held in the doctor's warm mouth for a long moment before a clever tongue cleaned him. He hissed in oversensitivity when Hannibal gently tucked him back into his underwear and buttoned his trousers.

"Beautiful," Hannibal murmured, licking his lips as he rose to his feet with cat like grace. He cupped Will's face, "so beautiful. I could see you every day forever and I would never forget this moment, how you look right now, mano širdie."

Will sighed at the words that echoed ones he'd said before, leaning his forehead against his lover's, deeply satisfied. They stood quietly among the carnage of Will's kill for a moment, enjoying the silence before Hannibal pulled away.

"We should go."

Nodding, Hannibal reluctantly cleaned his face and hands for him, tossing the wipes in the bag with his clothing. Relatively clean, they made their way out through the rear garden, ensuring they avoided the soft grass, leery of leaving impressions.

As they made their way home, Will was reminded of what Bedelia had called him when informed of the 'escape' plan for Hannibal. *Righteous, reckless, twitchy little man*. He snorted, Hannibal shooting him a look of consternation. He waved his hand dismissively. No point bringing her up. It would spoil the mood between them. Though less now than it might have previously.

"I was a touch excessive," Will muttered, sitting down heavily, all adrenaline gone, replaced by a bone deep exhaustion.

"You have a penchant for it, mano širdie."

Will simply raised an eyebrow in question.

Hannibal sighed, "you can be incredibly sassy, quantifiably bitchy and undeniably rude, which in you, I find incredibly endearing. That," he added, waving his hand in the direction they'd come. "That was possessive, meškiau."

"You're all those things too, as well as pompous and pedantic." He swept Hannibal's hair off his forehead, "you're a bitchy pretentious fuck and I love you all the more for it." He kissed Hannibal's cheek, "you're *my* bitchy pretentious fuck."

"I should eat you for that," Hannibal hissed, hauling Will close to kiss him properly.

Will laughed, "I think you already did, darlin'."

Hannibal gave an amused sigh, "and you taste sublime, mano širdie."

Chapter End Notes

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Aš taip pat myliu tave: I love you too
Aš rimtai : I mean it.
Laukiu nesulaukiu: I wait, and I cannot wait
Mylimasis - basically "beloved".
Mano meilė [when directly addressing a person: mano meile] - very literally "my love"
Brangusis - basically "darling/dear/precious".
Mielasis - literally "cute/lovely/dear", but in essence close to "honey/sweetheart".
Mažius/mažiukas/mažasis [when directly addressing a person: mažiau/mažiuk/mažasis] - literally "the little one", but could be approximated to "baby/babe", however, more on the cute side without sexual connotations.
Širdelė [when directly addressing a person: širdele] - literally "little heart", but in essence close to "sweetheart"
Zuikis: [when directly addressing a person: zuiki] - literally "rabbit".
Katinas/katukas/kačiukas [when directly addressing a person: katine/katuk/kačiuk] - literally "male cat/kitten."
Meškius [when directly addressing a person: meškiau] - basically "bear/little bear." Approximately "teddy bear."
Mangustas: Mongoose [when directly addressing a person: mangustai.
Mangustėlis/mangustukas: little mongoose. [when directly addressing a person: mangustėli/mangustuk.
Neprieinamas: When someone tries really hard to seduce another, to no avail, Lithuanians would say they were neprieinama. It has a similar meaning to the English word unreachable, but it carries more power and emphasis on how impossible it is to end up with a person you love.
Nepakartojama: Lithuanians use this word to describe a perfect situation which will never happen again. The word literally translates to 'unable to repeat.' For example, if someone said šis vakaras buvo nepakartojama, it would mean something along the lines

of ‘this evening was beyond incredible’.
intelekto nesužalotu veidu: a face unharmed by intellect, “a fool.”

Chapter 6

The scenes they create together baffle the police. On one hand is the unbridled violence of them (Will), on the other is the almost clinical nature of the lack of evidence (Hannibal). It is a dichotomy they cannot fathom. They have yet to realise there are two that are the masters of each creation. Even if they should involve the FBI, it would still be difficult to pinpoint, something that Will and Hannibal count on. After all, the FBI prized bloodhound is one of the men they should be seeking.

Hannibal finds it profoundly amusing.

When Will bothers to give it thought, he found it amusing too.

There are bodies that are not found, those being the ones that Hannibal harvests from. The ones left to be found are left, more or less, intact. No artistic tableau to be dissected by the authorities and give a hint to their creators. Hannibal preyed upon the rude, Will preyed upon the vile.

It is not all blood and chocolate, they have their moments like any couple, although, their moments can tend to be rather violent. At least, anyone else would find it violent. To them, it's foreplay.

One such instance, though neither can really recall why they were arguing, resulted in Will leaping from his seat at the dining table and sinking his fork into Hannibal's thigh with a snarl. In stead of retaliation, Will had looked down to see Hannibal gazing up at him with a look of awe. All annoyances forgotten, Hannibal wrenched the fork out of his thigh and pulled Will into his lap, heedless of anything other than kissing him senseless.

Though they lived in the murder capital of the world, neither man felt the need to be wary of that, entirely secure in the knowledge they could and would take care of themselves.

So it was a little shocking to have their home broken into.

Will woke to the sound of both his and Hannibal's phones beeping, the other man stirring beside him.

The silent alarm had been set off.

Hannibal was up and out of bed in a moment, "kačiuk, turn those off." He gestured to their phones and Will lurched to the side to silence them, watching as Hannibal slid a pair of pajama pants up his legs, tossing a second pair to Will. Then he was reaching under the bed for a several knives, one handed to Will. They nodded once at each other and slid out into the hallway. Hannibal went to the main stairway, Will to the one at the rear.

He paused halfway down. Nessa. Shit, where was she? His anxiety spiked, rushing down the last few steps until he was in the mudroom. He stood still, controlling his breathing so he could listen. He knew he wouldn't hear Hannibal, not while he was stalking, the man was spookily quiet when he was hunting.

He heard a low growl, then a pained yelp and Will raced through to the kitchen. He found Nessa cowering in the corner, shuffling on her belly to him as he extended the hand without the knife. He petted her down, feeling for injuries, whispering to her to go up stairs. She shivered for a moment then bolted for the stairs.

Crouching low behind the kitchen island, Will cocked his head as he listened intently. The hushed sound of footsteps. Not Hannibal. He was hidden from view by the overhang of the counter, keeping his breathing quiet as he waited for the intruder to come into his line of sight.

Utilitarian boots came into view, another step and Will struck, swiping over the back of the man's calf, blood spraying the side of the island and Will's face. Licking his lips, Will struck again, a long gouge to the man's thigh and he was down with a pained gasp.

A harshly whispered query from what sounded like the dining room.

Will almost wanted to laugh at the inept behaviour. He turned his attention back to the man on the floor beside him, bleeding all over the marble tiles. He was trying to crawl away, but was heading to the butler's pantry, which was where he would end up regardless. Will leaned over him, pressing the blade of the knife to his neck, urging him on. Once the man had crawled to the pantry, Will tugged on the roll of plastic and laid it over the floor, then pushed the man onto his back, straddling him. With a quick slice, the man was gurgling his last, Will's hand over the wound to stop the arterial spray from covering the whole room. Blood pooled on the plastic as he watched the light dim in the man's eyes, then he was back on his feet.

He paused as he spotted the other assailant stalking towards him, noting the looming shadow of his lover behind him. He smirked, twirling the dripping blade in his fist as Hannibal made his presence known, arm coming around the man's chest and pinning him.

"Forward, if you please, " Hannibal commanded, walking the man to where the blood was pooled on the floor of the kitchen, tutting at the smears leading to the butler's pantry.

Will shrugged, "I got him on the plastic, I'll clean this lot up later."

"Mop first, then the steam cleaner, zuikis" Hannibal specified.

"Yes, I know, mop first then the steam cleaner."

Hannibal jerked his head towards the lounge room, "there's another in there."

"Any mess?"

A quick quirk of Hannibal's lips told Will what he needed to know. He'd snapped his neck. Blood was harder to clean up off the hardwood floors. The man in Hannibal's hold widened his eyes so Will could see the whites of them in the dim light as the blade in Hannibal's hand came up to his throat. He walked the man closer to where Will stood, "bowels in, or bowels out?"

Assessing the man in Hannibal's hold with an expert eye, he shrugged, "this one's leaner, but I'd rather not have *more* mess to clean up." The acrid scent of urine met Will's nostrils and he grimaced, "the meat'll be bitter, brangusis."

The man began to babble incoherently in Spanish, the only words Will could make out were *no, please, I can pay.*

"You think we need your money? I'd much rather harvest your liver and kidneys," Hannibal drawled in the man's ear. He glanced up at Will, maroon eyes glowing red in the dim light. "Bowels in, mano širdie, so we have less to clean up out here." Then he was frowning, "where is Nessa?"

"I sent her upstairs, she'll be under my…the other bed." He sneered, trying to hold in his anger, "the one I got kicked her."

Hannibal sucked in a deep breath, "then she shall have his heart."

Normally Will objected to the doctor feeding their dog human meat, but this time, he felt it was entirely justified. He nodded once to indicate his agreement. Hannibal was just as distressed by Nessa's treatment as Will was.

Hannibal made the man kneel over his friend, as Will rolled out more plastic.

Their most serious conversations occurred in bed, Will pressed to Hannibal's side, arm over his still svelte waist, head resting on his shoulder as Hannibal stroked his curls.

Conversations that Hannibal required darkness and safety for. Before he threw open the hatches to the oubilettes that housed his most despised and tragic memories. Will watched as Hannibal flinched, knowing he was hearing the screams that were normally muted in the halls of his memory palace. He knew the air would be painted in them as Hannibal inched closer to the center, fumbling at the latches that held back the hardest of things. Latches only opened through touch alone.

Hannibal's earliest years.

Eggplants and copper tubs.

In the Hall of Beginning.

Holding Mischa's plump little hand as they fed bread to black swans. *Anniba! Anniba!* His mother, Simonetta, a blend of Sforza and Visconti, she of the maroon eyes that her son

inherited. Fleeing the castle, a hunting wagon hitched to the draft horse, Cesar. His tutor, Mr Jakov. He spoke quietly of bodies frozen in the snow.

Under the scars left by Matthew Brown, the faintest of marks around Hannibal's wrists. Remnants of infection brought on by the chafing against shackles.

Will knew Hannibal had gone mute after the death of his sister, the man himself very reticent on the subject, but Will prodded gently, carefully.

"My memories are fragmentary, sometimes static things, but for as long as she lived, her favourite colour was purple. I would cut an eggplant from the vine and let her hold it as she bathed in a copper tub in the garden. She hadn't ever learned to say my name correctly, she would coo in her baby's voice, 'oh, Anniba, Anniba!'" Hannibal's breath hitched painfully, "I broke my arm trying to save her."

Will cupped Hannibal's face gently, noting the downward trajectory of his mouth, kissing him softly. Distracting him, giving him a better memory to associate with the speaking of Mischa. "Something good, darlin', just the good, not the bad, remember?"

It was the rule. Hannibal was to only think of the good things about Mischa, tell Will at least one thing that was a pleasant memory. If he wanted to discuss the bad things then they could do that, but not in the context of his sister. It was something Hannibal had himself suggested when Will expressed curiosity about her.

Hannibal closed his eyes briefly, "her hands reminded me of starfish."

Will craned his neck to look up at Hannibal, "cute."

A small smile replaced Hannibal's previous grimace, "yes, adorable."

That was much better. Not that Will wanted to *fix* Hannibal, as far as he was concerned, the doctor was fine how he was, but he did want him to be able to talk about his sister without so much agony.

It was much later that Hannibal spoke of Vladis Grutas and his cronies. But he did tell Will of his very first kill. Paul Momund, butcher, racist, swine. Hannibal told Will how the man had insulted his step-mother, Lady Murasaki, making inferences that Hannibal refused to repeat.

"How old were you?" Will asked softly, gazing at his cannibal.

"Thirteen." He sighed, running long fingers through Will's hair, more to soothe himself than Will. "My Uncle Robertus discovered what had been said and went to confront him, but he suffered a heart attack and died. I killed the butcher not long after. Lady Murasaki had her forebear's armor and weapons and she would honor him with floral arrangements. I used the short curved sword to slice him open, then removed his head. I placed his head before the altar where Lady Murasaki's ancestor's armor stood, beneath the *noh* masks. The police had heard of the altercation in the market and came to collect me. They put me through a

polygraph, but had to let me go. The butcher's head was then found on top of a mailbox. Lady Murasaki put it there. Not long after, we moved to Paris."

"She helped you?"

Hannibal shook his head, "no, she tolerated what I had done to the butcher, but she could not understand completely my need to find Grutas and his confederates."

Will snuggled closer, "he was the one Chiyoh killed."

"Yes."

"He was the last of them?"

Hannibal closed his eyes, "yes, the last. I found Enrikas Dortlich first. Then systematically worked through them. Lady Murasaki went back to Japan when I found Grutas. We exchanged polite letters for a time."

His lover was getting agitated, so Will reached up and pulled him into a languid kiss, feeling Hannibal gradually respond, then deepen the kiss, his tongue sliding against Will's sensually.

Chapter 7

Will was not a fan of the opera, not exactly. He could appreciate it, even take delight in the stories they told, but he didn't fall over in paroxysms of joy when he heard it. Hannibal, on the other hand, cultural snob that he was, adored the opera. He would sit in his seat, eyes often closed, an expression of wonder on his face. For that reason alone, Will endured the annoyance of a tuxedo and accompanied Hannibal to several events a year. Most often it was the Teatro Municipal of Caracas. Sometimes the Teresa Carreño Theatre, which is where they were that night, a brutally concrete monstrosity of a building as far as Will was concerned. Hannibal was more interested in the fact that Handel's Giulio Cesare was being performed. Will liked the fact that the tickets were relatively cheap and would not trigger any possible watch lists, and there was a bar. Plus the orchestra was decent, even by Hannibal's exacting standards. He'd promised not to gut the cellist.

Will didn't really care if his lover gutted the cellist or not, provided he wasn't dragged to any additional performances when a new one was procured.

In Teatro Municipal, he'd allowed Hannibal to indulge in a box for them, affording a little privacy. In Teresa Carreño, they sat among the masses. Adhering to their rules for maintaining their freedom. Indulge a little, but not all the time. Teresa Carreño meant a suit and not necessarily a tux, so he was comfortable enough, though seeing Hannibal in a tuxedo was damned compelling as far as making him want to go through the anxiety inducing events that seemed to be the norm at Teatro Municipal. Hence Hannibal insisting on a private box.

They adjusted for one another.

Will wound through the crowd, heading straight for the bar, asking for two glasses of red while Hannibal secured their seats. He preferred aisle seats, and would make sure they could both see easily. Will turned around, glasses in hand and met a familiar pair of eyes.

His grip of the glasses tightened enough that he feared he might shatter them.

Margot Verger.

She immediately looked around for her wife, Will grabbing her arm, "she's safe if he doesn't see her," he hissed in her ear.

They both spotted Alana sitting in a completely different section to Hannibal, and the doctor hadn't seemed to note her presence. However, as they watched, Alana's gaze wandered the room, alighting on the trim figure of the cannibal. They both saw her stiffen, her hands gripping the edge of her seat. Will ducked back out of her line of sight as she turned her head to look for her wife. Will thought his lover was unlikely to draw attention by killing her at the opera, but one could never tell with Hannibal. He just might deem it necessary.

“Can you protect her?” Margot asked quietly.

Will shook his head, “it’s better if he doesn’t see her, just leave, don’t look back. I can handle Hannibal, just don’t give him a reason to go after her.” He gave her a wry smile, “more of a reason.”

Margot understood what he meant. “I won’t say anything, no-one will know you are here from me, I can promise you that.” A wry smile of her own, “but I can’t promise you that she won’t react badly. Or contact Jack.”

“We’ve been here a while, probably time to move on,” he replied with a shrug. “I’ll go distract him, he’ll be wondering where I am soon, you take Alana and go. Try to impress upon her the stupidity of contacting Jack. Don’t mention me.”

Margot halted him, “you’re ok?” Big doe eyes peering at him with obvious concern. None for herself as such, plenty for her wife, but there was quite a bit for Will.

Will smiled, “I’m more than ok, Margot, I’m happy with him.” He didn’t wait for her response, making his way back to his lover. Handing Hannibal his glass, he very carefully, cautiously glanced around, on the pretext of examining the crowd, however he was making sure Alana was gone from her seat. Whatever Margot had told her, she was gone.

Hannibal took a sip, sighing at the slightly subpar wine, lacing the fingers of his free hand with Will’s, “I wouldn’t have killed her here, mano širdie.”

“I know, darlin’, but I thought it better to get her out of here. Margot will take her away.” He wasn’t even remotely shocked that Hannibal knew Alana and Margot were in the building. “She said she won’t say anything, but she can’t promise Alana won’t call Jack.”

Hannibal extracted his phone from his pocket and tapped away on it for a moment, then closed his eyes with a resigned sigh.

“Did you just book flights?”

A short nod from Hannibal, a light squeeze of his fingers, “and organised quarantine for Nessa. We have a little time, Uncle Jack cannot magically appear in the blink of an eye. And Margot, nor Alana, know where the house is. Our escape needn’t be a headlong flight.”

“I know,” Will murmured. “It’s been nice here, though. We stayed longer than I thought we would.” Almost two and a half years of peace. He glanced at Hannibal, “do we have three hours to sit through the opera, though?” He turned pleading blue eyes on Hannibal.

“We have the time, mano širdie,” the doctor informed him, amused at the attempt to coerce him into leaving before the performance had even begun. Far too wise to Will’s tricks. “There are only a few things to add to what is already packed and waiting, mainly things for Nessa. I’d like to collect up my sketches, I hate the thought of Uncle Jack pouring over them.”

Will hummed, leaning his head back, “yeah, Alana might call Jack and tell him about you, but she didn’t even see me, best to keep him wondering.” If Jack saw the sketches of Will he was sure to tip him off that the pair were together, and more than alive. He’d rather have Jack in a state of stasis as far as that revelation was concerned.

“I am rather more concerned with him seeing you in a state of undress, mažiuk,” Hannibal murmured. “I am considerably more proprietal as a lover with you than I have ever been.”

Will snorted, “maybe you shouldn’t draw me nude so often then.”

Lush lips pursed, “your beauty needs to be appreciated, my darling. I am merely appreciating.”

With a wry smirk, Will brushed his lips of the lobe of Hannibal’s ear, “I prefer your other methods of appreciation, brangusis.”

Hannibal pulled him close, so that his head rested on the doctor’s shoulder, “I shall make sure to show you the true depth of that appreciation when we return home, mano širdie.”

“Mmm, I’ll hold you to that.”

As Handel’s opera told the frenetic story of Juilus Ceasar and Cleopatra, Will let the seemingly chaotic music wash over him, listening to the underlying balance and engaging proportions. He liked it, reaching over to Hannibal, clutching his hand. Their eyes met for a moment, a now familiar spark of lust and love arcing between them. Hannibal leaned in, pressing his lips to Will temple.

With the house in El Hatillo closed up and cleaned of their presence, Hannibal and Will drove to the private airfield that had been organised for their escape from Venezuela. Nessa settled in her crate for the flight, a few chew toys and her favourite blanket for comfort. Will was a touch anxious about her going into quarantine for over a month once they arrived in Spain, but Hannibal assured him the time would pass quickly and that she would be fine.

Hannibal had procured them both five day Barcelona City Passes, which essentially gave them the run of the city, including the ability to by-pass the lines into the attractions that he wanted to show Will. First was Sagrada Familia, Will floored by the size and grandeur of the still incomplete cathedral. Museu Picasso, Jardì Botànic de Barcelona, Fundació Joan Miró, and Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya. Will couldn’t help but drag Hannibal to the Museu de la Xocolata, though the gastronomically inclined doctor was rather fascinated with the museum dedicated to chocolate.

“I knew you’d enjoy it,” Will laughed.

Hannibal pursed his lips, wanting to be annoyed, but finding Will’s delight infectious. “I did think I would consider it banal, but it was fascinating. Very educational.”

Will grinned, blue eyes twinkling, “you even put up with the kids running around, I’m proud of you.” He nudged Hannibal in the side, “or more precisely, you tolerated their parents.”

Hannibal went so far as to roll his eyes, “oh, how very droll, mielasis.”

Back in Venezuela, Jack Crawford stalked the streets of Caracas, eventually entering the recently vacated home of a foreign couple. A couple he suspected were Hannibal Lecter and Will Graham. His thoughts on whether he wanted it to be true or not were not shared with anyone. He found the house late one evening, granted permission to enter as a possible rental. The furniture was all covered in cloth. He removed several pieces to inspect what had been left, a little puzzled by what he found. Most of the furniture was modern, not at all the tastes of Hannibal Lecter. The cannibal liked antiques, his house in Baltimore had been filled with them. In the house in El Hatillo, there were a few pieces, but not many. A pair of settees in the lounge, a four poster bed in one of the bedrooms. That was essentially it. He could make out spaces on walls where something once hung, but there was very little in the way of artwork left behind.

In one of the bedrooms, he thought he detected the faintest scent of a dog, but there was no other sign.

He sprayed the kitchen with luminol, then extracted a portable black light from his coat. Nothing. Well, not entirely, but only amounts that would normally be found in a kitchen. The same with the butler’s pantry. He sighed deeply, stuffing the luminol and black light back in his coat pockets and stood in the centre of the silence.

The kitchen had seemed so promising. It was just to Hannibal Lecter’s tastes, perfect for a gourmand.

Alana had been convinced she had seen Hannibal.

Her wife had taken Jack aside when he visited them, worry and sadness in her eyes, speaking to Jack in whispers of Alana’s growing paranoia. “I don’t know what she saw, Jack,” Margot said softly. “I do know she *thinks* she saw Dr Lecter, but I didn’t.”

Jack Crawford, canny and intelligent, probed for any hint of a lie in her words and found none.

In his haste to track the cannibal, he neglected to ask the question he should have. Margot Verger hadn’t seen Hannibal Lecter, but he didn’t ask if she’d seen Will Graham.

Margot, for her part, didn't mention him either.

Chapter 8

In a sprawling villa in Granada, a place Hannibal had recalled fondly and was eager to return to, Will ran his hands through Hannibal's hair, smiling down at the man resting his head in his lap, Nessa, newly arrived from her incarceration in quarantine, laying on the floor in a happy sprawl. The little poodle had thoroughly investigated their new abode, nosing into each and every corner, then gave it the stamp of approval by flopping on the tile floor to sleep. After many doggy kisses for Will and Hannibal and much excited wiggling.

"I will allow Alana her life." Hannibal tipped his head so he could look up at Will. "I like Margot, and I have no wish to cause her distress. I certainly have no wish to kill a child. However, she will never believe I will let her go, so she will be looking over her shoulder the rest of her life. Punishment enough, I think."

Will hummed thoughtfully, "Alana wouldn't understand us, she never could, but I prefer her alive."

Hannibal twisted his head, meeting Will's eyes with his own, "Bedelia is in Germany."

With a snort, Will grimaced, "I do not prefer *her* alive." He tightened his grip on Hannibal's hair, lifting his face for a biting kiss. "You can kill her, but you will *not* let any part of her pass your lips."

Hannibal preened at the possessive tone, licking into Will's mouth eagerly. "Of course, mylimasis, I will forgo my meal for you," he murmured when Will nipped at his lip. Will groaned as Hannibal crawled up his body, straddling him, lips sliding over his own. "What of Molly and Walter?"

Will groaned again, this time in frustration, "not now, Hannibal."

He got a low growl in response, "yes, *now*, my darling. I would know your intentions regarding them." His hands fumbled with Will's belt and fly, "my placeholder's fate has been decided, what of yours."

Will's head fell back, giving Hannibal free reign to sink his teeth into the flesh of his throat, "fuck, you don't have to be jealous, darlin'. I'm yours." A large hand curled around the shaft of his cock, "damn it, Hannibal. This is blatant manipulation."

A squeeze to his cock. "I beg to differ, širdele. You are completely aware of my intentions, therefore, it cannot be manipulation. That would only be the case if you were unaware."

"Semantics, Hannibal."

"You are not answering my question, *William*."

Will grunted in frustration, scrabbling at Hannibal's back, desperate for more friction than his lover was providing. "Fuck, fine! I don't *care*, Hannibal. I don't care where they are, don't care what they are doing. They don't matter, darlin', *you matter*."

Hannibal was eerily efficient at getting them both naked, single minded and utterly focused on Will. Apparently he approved of the answer he'd received. With Hannibal's feverish lips on his, lithe body straddling him again, Will could only drown in Hannibal's emotions, mingling with his own.

As a consequence, it took him a rather long time to notice that Hannibal had managed to wrench the side table drawer open and reach into the very back to extract the tube of lubricant that had been stashed there. It took just as long to realise that Hannibal had made no move to prepare him with said lube.

His eyes flew open as Hannibal whined into his mouth.

He pulled back, examining the man arching in his lap, baring his teeth so Will can see his fangs. Normally they make Will grin, but right now, he's far too enamoured of the fact that he can see movement in one of Hannibal's arms, clearly vanishing behind himself.

It's a new development and one that Will had never expected. He did enjoy Hannibal fucking him silly, but watching Hannibal preparing himself is so damned erotic he wants to bite him all over.

Because his cannibal is pathological in his need to discuss *everything*, they have talked about Hannibal being bottom several times. A confession of lack of experience in that position had been met with silence from Will, not that he really doubted it. Had possibly even suspected it before Hannibal said the words out loud. There was something so inherently dominant about Hannibal it was hard to think of him being submissive. That was until Hannibal gleefully informed him what a service top was. It certainly adjusted Will's previous opinions on the whole homosexual intercourse thing. He'd kind of figured that one stuck to the role that they chose. Innocent really.

All in all, he had not been expecting Hannibal to essentially jump his bones as they lay on the chaise in the lounge. He had anticipated a bed, soft lighting, all the accoutrements that Hannibal usually employed when he was truly in the mood to seduce.

Instead, he had a whining, writhing cannibal in his lap, desperately seeking his mouth for kisses as he fingered himself open.

The next sound that came from Hannibal was not one of pleasure, but rather a bitten off whimper of pain.

"Hey, Hanni, no, come on, slow down," Will murmured, caressing Hannibal's thighs. When that didn't elicit the response he wanted, he fisted his hands in silver-blonde locks and made Hannibal meet his eyes. "Aš rimtai," he hissed. "You made it a wonderful experience for me the first time, let me do that for you."

A flash of defiance in his eyes, then Hannibal bent his head, resting it against Will's. The younger of the two could feel the fine tremors running through the elder.

Ah. Hannibal was pushing through his nerves, attempting bravado. He was aroused, that much was patently obvious to Will, but now that he knew what to search for, he found it in his eyes and in the way he tried to remain motionless in Will's lap. Trepidation.

"Let me take you to bed, darlin'."

Hannibal's tongue darted out, touched his top lip briefly before it was hidden away again. He rose slowly, turning to gather their hastily discarded clothing.

"Leave them," Will said gently, taking his hand to pull him away.

"Will…"

Inhaling deeply, "no, leave the fucking clothes, Hannibal." He tugged and Hannibal followed obediently, "you were the one trying to rush a minute ago, so don't fucking dither about now. We're doing this properly."

Once they reached their bedroom, Will laid Hannibal out on the bed, admiring the long lean lines of him, running his hands over taut strong thighs, curving his fingers around his hips to drag him forward so that he was laying with his knees bent. The beautiful creature in front of him deserved worship and Will intended to do just that. He thought of how Hannibal treated him, how he'd make him a shaking mess when he felt inclined to, when they took time rather than the frenzied fucking they often devolved into.

Hannibal widened his stance, knees wide apart, spine in a sinuous curve as he gripped the headboard for balance, head tossed back as Will's tongue swiped over his entrance, a deep groan vibrating through his body, enough that Will could feel it where he clasped Hannibal's hips tight. The act was one that Hannibal delighted in performing on Will, dragging moans and whines out of him as he licked and lapped at him. To reciprocate had Will rolling his eyes back in his head with pleasure. Hannibal quivered as Will stiffened his tongue to prod at the furled rim of his ass, teasing at penetration, but not quite pushing hard enough.

He glanced up over Hannibal's back to where his hands curled over the plush headboard, whitening and clenching, then releasing, trying to maintain some semblance of control.

Will wanted to wreck it, mess him up, make him squirm and plead.

As much as Hannibal delighted in the physical, he was, at heart, an intellectual being, deriving titillation most when he was stimulated that way. Will pulled back just a fraction, so that Hannibal could still feel his breath, the ghost of a touch and let him *think* about what was going to happen next.

He knew the tactic was working when Hannibal rocked his pelvis back, eager for Will's tongue.

“Does it feel good, darlin’?” he asked softly, nipping at Hannibal’s ass cheek teasingly.

Hannibal fought back a whine, nodding, “yes.”

The word had been bitten of, terse almost, giving a hint to the frustration at the lack of further stimulation. Will swept his hands over Hannibal’s hips, “do you want more?”

Hannibal broke, “yes, please, Will, yes.”

Will’s eyes widened at the fervently desperate tone, yet he didn’t give him what he was begging for, not quite yet. He kissed Hannibal’s tailbone, pressing his fingers into his ass, dragging his lips back to the now twitching ring of muscle. Hannibal sighed as his tongue flicked out to tease again.

He stiffened his tongue and pressed, feeling the resistance, then Hannibal let him in with a startled gasp. Will gazed up along the sinuous line of Hannibal’s back to the fresh patch of newly grown skin where the Verger brand once was. It was healed now, a faint pink line around the edge of the grafted skin, the center paler than Hannibal’s tan. He reached up and caressed the bumps of Hannibal’s spine until his palm rested right in the middle of the pale patch, his tongue flicking.

“Mangustai, *please*,” Hannibal keened, rocking back onto Will’s face with an urgency unexpected. He twisted his head around, silvered strands of hair falling over his forehead, the red glint in his eyes blown away by his pupils, wide and wild with his desperation.

Will moved his mouth away again, Hannibal whining at the loss of contact, and sank his teeth into the meat of Hannibal’s ass.

Hannibal dropped to his elbows, arching into Will’s bite with a deep groan of appreciation, clutching the sheets beneath him almost hard enough to tear them. Will swapped to his other ass cheek, delivering another bite with relish, drinking in his lover’s sounds of pleasure. He fumbled for the lube and coated his fingers in it, wasting no more time slipping a finger in.

Hannibal shuddered, then stilled as Will slowly slid it in and out.

“Alright?”

His head bobbing up and down in the affirmative, Hannibal tentatively rocked back onto the digit. “Yes,” he whispered after a moment.

The doctor’s nerves had receded for the moment which pleased Will. It meant that they could both focus on the pleasure rather than the mechanics, though he took the fact that Hannibal felt nervous at all for the compliment that it was. He was the one person who could elicit such a response from him, worm in under the mask, see him for who he was. Love him.

Hannibal was vulnerable to Will, and only Will.

By the time Hannibal was fully prepared for him, Will was vibrating with anticipation, belatedly realising that it was Hannibal’s emotions affecting him just as much as his own. He

felt his own anticipation, but Hannibal's was swamping him. He was eager, wanton in his desire to have Will inside him.

Will had become used to Hannibal's reverent attitude towards him, but this was so far beyond that. The pure want and adoration was ebbing around him, battering at his mind, seeping into his pores, very nearly tangible. Will feels like he is wrapped in Hannibal's want and need, cocooned, only the lack of eye contact holding him above and able to breathe. He knows that once their eyes do meet, he'll be lost in the tide, but not floundering, because Hannibal will find him, hold him there with him.

It's Hannibal that takes matters into his own hands, frustrated with Will's slow pace, flipping over onto his back and spreading his legs wide as if there was ever any doubt that that would be the position he'd be taken in. Will knew from the moment it all started that Hannibal would want to see him. And see him he does, the expression on his face as it goes slack with pleasure is transcendent, a look that makes Will's insides fizz with warmth.

There has never been anyone that adores him, loves him, lusts after him, nor knows him, like Hannibal.

The near constant stream of Lithuanian is almost incomprehensible, Hannibal's accent devolving to a slur of sound as Will pushed in, seating himself immediately in Hannibal's tight heat.

The man himself had his head tossed back, back curving off the bed, his hands gripping Will's shoulders as his ridiculously long legs circle Will's waist to hold him close. As if Will would be any where but between Hannibal's muscular thighs right then.

His lover has never wished to be treated like glass, so Will doesn't, thrusting in and out, almost bestial and brutal. The resounding slap of flesh battles with Hannibal's broken sob, but Will felt it as much as he heard it.

Meeting tear filled whiskey coloured eyes, Will didn't find pain as the cause, but overwhelming love. And the knowledge that what he felt what returned with equal fervor. Hannibal truly believed he was loved. No trace of the faint doubt that still clouded his eyes so rarely. Will had finally wiped it away, eradicated it.

It's exquisite. Hannibal is exquisite beneath him, laid out like a treasured gift, golden skin gleaming as he cants his hips up to take Will deeper into himself, offering all that he is for Will to experience and own. His motions shift from bestial to reverent, worshipful as Hannibal's hands guide his face down for a kiss.

It was a deliciously slow built, a gradual ascent until Hannibal was gasping Will's name breathlessly, his whole body seizing, fingernails digging into Will's skin, his voice hoarse and higher pitched than Will had ever heard.

Watching the way he tumbled over into the abyss brought Will to his own precipice, willingly flinging himself off into the void after his lover.

Will fiddled with the onyx band on Hannibal's finger, frowning at it. Hannibal tilted his head to look at him, sensing something was on his partners mind. He watched as Will twirled the wedding band, small smile tugging at his own lips as he deduced the train of Will's thoughts.

Will huffed as Hannibal's amusement washed over him, looking up to find maroon eyes squarely fixed on him.

"Could we make it real somehow?"

Hannibal blinked slowly, tongue caressing his top lip. "I believe it could be arranged, mylimasis." His fingers scratched at Will's scalp through his curls, "but I do feel what we have *is* real."

Wriggling so he could sit up, Will nodded, "yeah, so do I, but I kinda want to make it… official. I want it to be on record somewhere that we married, that we are committed to each other."

"Under our real names?"

Will nodded again, "yeah." He bit his lip as Hannibal's mind began to turn over the problem. "Adelmo and Oliver were married, Henri and Lucien are married, I…I really want Hannibal and Will to be married, darlin'."

A deep hum came from Hannibal's chest as his fingers halted in Will's hair, "anyone who married us wouldn't be allowed to live, mano širdie."

Will shrugged, "so, we find a celebrant that is an asshole. After they file the paperwork, we could take them out of the equation."

"We could take a vacation and do it while we were there," Hannibal murmured, clearly plotting how they could do it.

"A honeymoon and wedding all at once."

"Somewhere that it will take time for the certificate to be processed, give us time to get back home before it hits the news, if indeed it does." Hannibal smiled at Will, eyes lighting up, "or we could announce it ourselves, mano širdie."

Will snorted at his lover's mischievous expression. He poked him in the chest, "you just want to gloat and make Jack angry."

Hannibal pouted, "it would not be gloating, my darling, I am proud to call you mine." He snickered softly as Will glared at him, "but, yes, I would like to ruffle Uncle Jack's feathers. I am confident we could cover our tracks and get away clean. What of keeping your existence a secret, mano širdie?"

Will clambered into Hannibal's lap, cupping his face, "I know I asked Margot to keep it quiet that she'd seen me, muddy the waters, but Jack likely knows I'm alive and with you already. I see no point in hiding my continued existence from him any longer." He shot Hannibal a devious little smile, "and besides, I find I wish him to see what I have become. As much as you helped in crafting me, he did too, with his inability to leave me alone, the way he pushed when he shouldn't have."

"You wish to punish him?"

"I wish to make him feel guilt."

Hannibal stroked his cheek, "what you have become is beautiful. And far beyond what I envisioned for you. He used you, I delight in you."

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bedelia halted in the doorway to the dining room, doe eyes widening, handbag dropping forgotten by her feet. Tears sprang to her eyes and she averted her gaze, chest heaving suddenly.

Will could see the tremble in her hands, feel the deep resignation of her situation filling her. He didn't feel sorry for her, she'd known all along this was the only outcome of her relationship with Hannibal. Will had always seen through her veneer of vulnerability, the facade of feminine complicity, through to the woman capable of biting remarks veiled in psychiatric advice.

He cut his eyes to Hannibal to find him smiling back at him. Observation or participation his maroon gaze asked.

Will smirked, gesturing with his hand for Hannibal to go ahead. He'd observe for now.

A tear dropped from Bedelia's eye, trailing down her porcelain cheek, but she didn't try to run, recognising the futility in the act. Hannibal was faster, Will would be on his heels as they both ran her down. With two apex predators in her dining room, Bedelia submitted to her fate.

Hannibal stalked forward, brushing perfectly coiffed blonde hair off her shoulder and Will's eyes narrowed at the intimacy it implied.

"Tu neturi ko bijoti, mano meile," he murmured to Will, his love burning in his eyes. "Ji yra niekas, palyginti su tavimi."

"I know," Will answered as Bedelia's eyes flitted back and forth between them, obviously confused and not understanding what Hannibal had said. He recalled one of their conversations.

"Hannibal has agency in the world."

"Hannibal has no intention of seeing me dead by any other hand than his own. And only then if he can eat me. He's in no position to eat me now."

"If you play, you pay."

"You have paid dearly. It excites him to know that you are marked in this particular way."

"Why?"

"Why do you think?"

"Bluebeard's wife. Secrets you're not to know, yet sworn to keep."

"If I'm to be Bluebeard's wife, I would have preferred to be the last."

"Is Hannibal in love with me?"

"Could he daily feel a stab of hunger for you, and find nourishment at the very sight of you? Yes. But do you ache for him?"

It seemed she was recalling the same conversation. "Bluebeard's husband," she spat out at him.

Hannibal raised an inquisitive brow at Will who merely shrugged. He'd explain later. He turned his gaze back to Bedelia, "I more than ache for him, we *are* each other, conjoined, entwined, *one*. We find nourishment in one another." He stalked around her the same way Hannibal had approached her, cat like, graceful. "I observe because I want to watch the master at work, you observed because you couldn't bear to participate."

Hannibal was radiating absolute glee, positively beaming at Will as he circled Bedelia. He captured Will's hand, pressing a kiss to his palm and Bedelia's eyes widened further as she spotted the matching bands on their fingers. Will cupped Hannibal's cheek, smiling at him softly, trailing his fingers to his lover's lips. Hannibal's tongue slid out to curl around his index finger and drew it into his mouth. Bedelia inhaled sharply, tilting her head away from the blatantly erotic display between them only making Will's smile wider.

Hannibal was correct. He didn't need to worry, Hannibal was his and considered him so much more than she could ever have been.

"Placeholder," he whispered as Hannibal suckled his finger.

"Inconsequential," Hannibal replied after he let Will's finger drop from his mouth.

"Surrogate," Will hissed, his eyes never leaving Hannibal's maroon. They speak with more than words in that look. Devotion and permanence is what they have. Desire, love and monstrous intent.

Bedelia had apparently had enough of their eye fucking. "Stop playing with your food."

Will laughed as Hannibal gripped her by the hair to expose her throat. He leaned in, brushing his mouth close to her ear, "what makes you think you're good enough to eat, Bedelia?" He stepped back enough to bore his blue eyes into hers, "you weren't good enough to be the last and you're not good enough to be a meal."

"You kept trying to tempt me into killing you," Hannibal murmured, his voice low and dangerous. "Goading me into situations that you thought would make me strike. And I did strike, just not at you. Do you know why, Bedelia?"

The frightened woman shook her head as much as Hannibal's grip allowed.

“Because I knew what you were doing. You were too much of a coward to leave on your own, but wanted to be with me too much to do it.” Hannibal released her, “it bored me. You tried to manipulate me into eating my darling Will. Don’t you think that’s a little rude?”

Will leaned in before she could formulate a response, “poor Bedelia, can’t live with him, can’t live without him. Now, you’ll never have to worry about it again. You’ve never crushed the bird in the grass, Bedelia.” He inhaled deeply, “I have.”

Hannibal laughed, a deep dark chuckle at Will’s bitchiness.

Bedelia spat curses at the pair of them, hissing as Hannibal jerked her head back by her hair again, eyes wide when she spotted the syringe.

“Ah, my dear Bedelia, there is no point insulting me, in fact you waste your breath insulting either of us. For, you see, in order for your insults to find their target, we would have to respect you.” Hannibal leered at her as she started to slump, “and I assure you, we don’t.” He let her collapse on the floor at their feet, reeling Will in to kiss him softly, “shall we prepare our true dinner, my darling?” He glanced at the woman at their feet, “we have plenty of time to dine before we move onto the…noisier part of the proceedings.”

Will laughed, “yeah, sure.”

Hannibal bends to lift Bedelia into his arms and deposits her on her bed, then retrieved the bag with his tools for the procedure of removing her leg.

“It would be ideal to hang the meat for a weak before consumption, but as we are not partaking, I should think an hour or two should suffice while we have our meal.”

The removal is clinical despite the setting, Hannibal meticulous as he tied off arteries and veins, cauterising where he needed to, his bone saw taking care of the femur, a flap of skin left to cover the ensuing stump. Will wouldn’t have bothered with that but his cannibal is one for maintaining a certain aesthetic. Furthermore, Bedelia will not soil her evening gown with blood through the wrappings of bandages while Will and Hannibal move through the motions of a last meal with her.

When she woke, it was to the table perfectly laid for three.

Will tilted his head as he watched her come back to consciousness, her chest heaving, blue eyes hazy, then she grabbed a fork from her setting, hiding it in her lap and he wanted to laugh.

Will tilted his head to survey the way Hannibal had posed Bedelia, snorting once he recognised Medea, dressed in a Grecian gown, head thrown back, arm raised as it was on the sarcophagus attributed to her. The jilted woman. Hannibal raised a brow at Will’s laughter, adjusting her hand to his liking before he stood back to appraise his work. He bent to fix the folds of her gown so her missing leg wouldn’t be noticed easily and nodded.

"They'll know it was you."

Hannibal smirked, a tiny thing, but amused nonetheless. He gestured to the dining table, set for three, with Bedelia's leg in the centre, cooked to perfection, but untouched. "That will confuse matters. They will wonder why I didn't consume her." He stroked Will's cheek, "and the discovery of her death will tell them I was here. It was well known I wanted to kill her."

"It was well known you wanted to *eat* her, Hannibal," Will retorted.

Hannibal shrugged, "I find myself far more interested in keeping my husband happy than keeping my promise to Bedelia. You told me you didn't want any part of her to pass my lips, so none shall."

"Simple as that?"

Hannibal pulled him closer, nuzzling his cheek affectionately, "simple as that, mano širdie."

Freddie Loundes wasn't one for swearing often, but she cursed up a storm when she opened the file emailed to her.

A close up of two men, their profiles cut to only show part of their faces, but she recognised them regardless. Will Graham's nose, part of his stubble covered jaw, his lips pressed to an onyx band on a elegant hand. Sharp, high cheekbone, lush lips and the nose of Hannibal Lecter, their foreheads pressed together. It was obviously a cropped photo from a larger scene, all identifying markers hidden and removed, all except those that would show who was in the picture. An announcement.

"Holy shit," she whispered. She fumbled for her phone when she saw who else had been sent the photo. "Jack, don't hang up, have you seen your email? Can you trace it?"

Jack sighed, a morose thing that conveyed how tired he was. "I've seen it, Ms Loundes. And no, it can't be traced, Dr Lecter is too clever for that. We do know they married, under their real names in Germany. We found the certificate lodged there after Bedelia Du Maurier was discovered in her home. We found that after the celebrant that married them turned up mutilated in his holiday house."

"It's real, they're really married?" She could hardly believe it, even after calling them murder husbands, even as her mind whirled with the article she would publish.

"They're married," he confirmed.

"Shit." Freddie ran her hand through her hair, mind racing faster and faster. "Murder husbands for real."

Jack Crawford grunted, “I would suggest you don’t go after them, Ms Loundes. I doubt they’ll enter the country again for a while, but I feel that this is a way for them to goad you into looking for them. And me. I think they would love to make good on how your death was faked and make it a permanent thing.” He paused, “they’re even more dangerous now. Hannibal Lecter has always known how to evade capture, Will Graham knows how law enforcement operates. We lost them in Venezuela, couldn’t even reliably confirm they’d been there, couldn’t even confirm Will Graham was alive, we found nothing in Germany. If you discover anything, it will be just to lure you close enough to strike at. You won’t survive that, Freddie.”

“You’ve given up,” Freddie said softly.

“Dr Du Maurier was on their list, I have no doubt we are both on there too. You’ve pissed both of them off too many times. Don’t go after them, I may not like you, but I have no desire to see you burnt.”

Freddie thought for a moment, “do you think they really love each other?”

Jack laughed bitterly, “yes, I do. Dr Lecter has been courting Will Graham since they day they met. He’s had so many chances to kill him, but he’s never gone through with it. And W…Will has helped him, warned him, chased after him. I don’t think they can be apart and God help anyone who tries to get between them.”

“What will you do now, Jack?”

Another bitter laugh, “retire, hope I die before they find me.”

Freddie sat back once the call ended, glancing at the photo on her laptop screen. She sat still, staring at it for a long time, then she slowly closed the lid and turned away. As much as a vein of curiosity ran through her, her sense of self preservation was stronger. It was a squirmy feeling knowing she was on the list for not one, but *two* murderers.

Chapter End Notes

Mano širdis: - literally “my heart” [when directly addressing a person: “mano širdie”].
Dievinu: expresses the feeling of something that exceeds perfect, adoration
A ave myliu: I love you, very uncommonly said
Aš taip pat myliu tave: I love you too
Aš rimtai : I mean it.
Laukiu nesulaukiu: I wait, and I cannot wait
Mylimasis - basically “beloved”.
Mano meilė [when directly addressing a person: mano meile] - very literally “my love”

Brangusis - basically “darling/dear/precious”.
Mielasis - literally “cute/lovely/dear”, but in essence close to “honey/sweetheart”.
Mažius/mažiukas/mažasis [when directly addressing a person: mažiau/mažiuk/mažasis] - literally “the little one”, but could be approximated to “baby/babe”, however, more on the cute side without sexual connotations.
Širdelė [when directly addressing a person: širdele] - literally “little heart”, but in essence close to “sweetheart”
Zuikis: [when directly addressing a person: zuiki] - literally “rabbit”.
Katinas/katukas/kačiukas [when directly addressing a person: katine/katuk/kačiuk] - literally “male cat/kitten.”
Meškius [when directly addressing a person: meškiau] - basically “bear/little bear.” Approximately “teddy bear.”
Mangustas: Mongoose [when directly addressing a person: mangustai.
Mangustėlis/mangustukas: little mongoose. [when directly addressing a person: mangustėli/mangustuk.
Neprieinamas: When someone tries really hard to seduce another, to no avail, Lithuanians would say they were neprieinama. It has a similar meaning to the English word unreachable, but it carries more power and emphasis on how impossible it is to end up with a person you love.
Nepakartojama: Lithuanians use this word to describe a perfect situation which will never happen again. The word literally translates to ‘unable to repeat.’ For example, if someone said šis vakaras buvo nepakartojama, it would mean something along the lines of ‘this evening was beyond incredible’.
intelekto nesužalotu veidu: a face unharmed by intellect, “a fool.”
Tu neturi ko bijoti : you have nothing to fear.
ji yra niekas, palyginti su tavimi : she is nothing, compared to you.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will watched Hannibal as he swum his laps in their pool, deeply appreciating the long lean lines of him. Hannibal swims most afternoons to keep himself in shape, and that is something else that Will appreciates, not that he would care particularly if the man let himself go a little. He thinks he might enjoy Hannibal with a soft little paunch. He chuckled to himself at the image. He's utterly besotted.

He's far more than besotted when Hannibal levers himself up on the edge of the pool, water streaming over his glistening body, enhancing the musculature of his torso, proud, golden as he reached for his towel. For a man well into his fifties, Hannibal is still in his prime.

Will rose from his seat, dragging the towel from Hannibal's hands and corralling him towards one of the lounges around the pool, making him lay back. He wrestled the snug swim trunks down Hannibal's thighs, exposing his glorious cock and sucked him down without any preamble, delighted by the way he felt him thicken and swell in his mouth. He tastes of cholrine and salt, and that familiar musk that is all Hannibal. He looked up to find darkened eyes watching him intently, plush lips parted on a moan as Will suckled around the head, moaning himself at the burst of pre-come on his tongue.

Pushing the swim trunks down further, he tossed them aside with a wet slap, and Hannibal immediately parted his thighs further, an invitation, allowing Will to kneel between them. Neither man spoke, they didn't need to, so completely in tune with each other and their desires. Hannibal laid himself back, moaning softly as Will administered to him, reveling in the worship.

Once Hannibal spilled down his throat he wrangled Will into position and performed his own benediction.

With a deeply sated sigh he pulled Will to his feet and led him back into the house.

"What brought that on?" Hannibal asked, amusement colouring his tone. Will merely shrugged as they entered Hannibal's kitchen. He stroked his hand along the smooth top of the island.

"Wanted to," he said eventually. "You looked like a God emerging from the ocean. Gorgeous." He moved over to where Hannibal was fussing with something in the sink, wrapping his arms around him from behind, resting his head against the space between his shoulders, feeling the way his muscles moved under the skin.

"Aphrodite rising from the seafoam," Hannibal mused.

Will chuckled, “yeah, something like that, but better because you’re mine.” He laughed outright when Hannibal spun in his arms and kissed him breathless. Pulling back so he could look up at his husband, “so, who’s for dinner?”

Hannibal’s teeth were sharp as he smiled, “the homophobic mechanic two towns over.”

Will shuddered as he remembered that particular hunt. “Perfect.” He let Hannibal go so he could start his preparations, skirting the island to lean over it and watch. “Jack Crawford retired,” he said nonchalantly as Hannibal pulled a knife from the block.

Hannibal raised a brow, “well, that’s interesting.” He thumbed the edge of the blade thoughtfully.

“Mmm,” Will hummed in agreement. “Apparently he’s planning to move to Florence.”

Hannibal’s nostrils flared, his eyes blazing and Will noted his annoyance. His husband adored Florence, wanted to move back there and live with Will, so he probably felt aggrieved at the thought of Jack Crawford soiling the city for him. Again. Then Will’s cannibal turned his head, knife still in his hand, contemplating the fact Florence wasn’t too much of a trip from their current residence. “What’s to be done about that?”

“I think it’s time for a little vacation, brangusis.”

Jimmy Price stared at the gently swirling waters of the Arno, Ponte Vecchio before him as he stood in the centre of the Ponte Santa Trinita. A small box made of cherry wood rested at his elbow on the stone balustrade, innocuous yet Jimmy felt like it was thrumming beside him. He patted the lid with a sigh, glancing up at the sky bleeding into dusk.

Florence was absolutely stunning, but he didn’t really see it.

The phone call had woken him a month earlier, making him jolt out of sleep and murmur sleepily to the enquiry on the other end. Then he was very suddenly awake.

In hindsight he’d been waiting for a call like that ever since Jack retired. Or before perhaps. He wasn’t sure any more. Had lost his sense of surety when Will Graham absconded with Hannibal Lecter. He’d grown more and more concerned as he watched Will change, evolve into something he didn’t recognise from the man he’d met. Will had become confident, smooth, no longer avoiding eye contact, no longer so awkward. He’d always had a whip crack smart mouth, but it had become tinged with the cadence of Hannibal Lecter’s speech patterns. It was something he had noticed early on in their acquaintance, that Will would unconsciously adopt the tone and verbiage of those he was around. He’d heard him picking up on Jack’s tone, and that of Doctor Bloom at times. Then, the more time he spent with Hannibal Lecter, the Doctor’s mannerisms and speech patterns had crept in. It had been unnerving.

Watching Jack Crawford sink into depression was heartbreaking.

There had been fury after the Dragon, after Jack had watched the footage filmed by Dolarhyde. Grainy images showing Hannibal and Will fighting together, the synchronicity of their combined attack. An embrace before they went off the cliff.

Jimmy didn't dare ask what Jack thought about that.

He had his own thoughts on it.

After Venezuela, Jack had been confused. He was unsure, puzzled by what he had and hadn't found. No sign of Will, barely any evidence of Hannibal other than the word of Alana Bloom, whose wife couldn't corroborate the story.

After Germany, Jack was despondent. He hadn't put up even a token protest at enforced retirement, going out with barely a whisper when Jimmy was more used to his bluff demeanor. A Jack that didn't protest, didn't yell, was a Jack that Jimmy Price didn't recognise. Will Graham was alive. Will Graham had married Hannibal Lecter. It was more than Jack could take.

And now, here he was, standing on the same bridge that Jack had stood on years before as he spilled Bella's ashes into the Arno. Jimmy patted the lid again, shaking his head.

The instructions had been precise.

The Ponte Santa Trinita, facing the Ponte Vecchio. Right in the centre. Jack hadn't wanted a long speech, no lauded words, he just simply stated that he wanted to be set free in the same fashion as his wife.

When he'd been called to Florence, the authorities hadn't even been sure what had killed Jack.

A possible heart attack, they told him somberly.

Jimmy sincerely doubted that.

It hadn't taken a lot to convince them to let him look at the coroners report, pouring over the blood work results, noting that Jack had been taking a common medication for heart disease, which he was confirmed to have at the time of his death. The amount in his blood stream was a little higher than the dose should have been, but the coroner posited that Jack Crawford had mistaken his dose.

Jimmy sincerely doubted that too.

Hannibal and Will were being careful. There hadn't been any bodies found with surgical trophies removed. The bodies that had been found and gingerly put forth as victims of the murderous lovers couldn't be definitively attributed to them. There was no profile they could work up based on the bodies. But Jimmy thought he noted a form of clinical chaos as he called it, that might be explained by the pair killing together. What he'd seen of the infamous

‘Dragon’ footage, Will was brutal and messy. Hannibal Lecter’s kills were generally clinical and precise, though the way he’d torn out Francis Dolarhyde’s throat spoke of a feral side.

The only victim that Jimmy could confidently say was theirs was Bedelia Du Maurier. Even if her amputated leg hadn’t been…*ingested*. The way her body had been posed in a parody of Medea had been telling. There had been something slightly bitchy about painting Bedelia as the slighted woman in the relationship. It spoke of jealousy and disgust.

None of it seemed to matter any more.

Jimmy reached for the box, removing the lid carefully. He tipped the ashes into the Arno with a resigned sigh.

“Goodbye Jack.”

He watched the water for a long moment, then turned and made his way back over the bridge. He halted when he thought he saw a familiar figure looming in a dark corner. He froze, rooted to the spot, then blinked and the figure was gone.

Jimmy felt his sweat cooling down his spine as he glanced about to see if the man’s partner, *husband*, was near by.

He’d never felt that he was on Hannibal’s list of victims, future victims, but seeing Will Graham lurking in the shadows made him rethink that, hurrying to his hotel.

Florence no longer held any appeal to Jimmy Price.

Hannibal sidled up to where Will had sequestered himself by a small cafe, “he saw you.”

Will shrugged, “yeah, maybe, not that it matters much. I was in shadow, he’ll never be entirely sure.” He turned his head, raking his eyes up and down his husband’s form, clad in leather. Seeing him dressed that way gave Will a tingle down his spine, arousal dripping into his stomach. Watching Hannibal handle a motorbike was all sorts of desirable. The way whiskey coloured eyes darkened told Will the older man had picked up on it.

“Mr Price amused me. He was always a little awkward, but endearing,” Hannibal murmured into Will’s ear, shifting ever closer.

“Jimmy’s ok,” Will added. “Zeller, not so much.” He shot Hannibal a wry grin, “but, I think they are both fine the way they are.”

Jack Crawford’s head lolled to one side, panting, his chest constricting. He pressed his palm hard over it, he’d taken his meds, as directed, just that morning. Sweat beading on his brow, he rolled over and reached for the phone, missing it in his disorientation, knocking it to the floor.

That's when he noticed the pair of brown dress shoes by the door.

His bleary eyes tracked up, a pair of legs, clad in impeccably pressed pants. Jack swallowed as his eyes trailed higher.

Hannibal Lecter waved at him, bending his hand on his wrist, just like how a child waves. Bye bye, Jack.

Bye bye, Jack.

Will leaned against Hannibal as they watched Jack succumb to the pains in his heart, gasping, writhing on the bed.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry if you've commented recently and I haven't replied, life has been...interesting of late and made it difficult to find time. I will get to them, I promise. In lieu of a response, have a chapter.
<3 Laz

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will gave gifts when he was angry or upset. Hannibal gave gifts when he felt contrite. Well, Hannibal actually gave gifts a great deal, but more so, and more extravagantly when he felt guilty about something. It was almost like a cat leaving a rat on the doorstep as an offering, especially in how he delivered said gifts. Hannibal didn't say sorry, not when he had promised in the very beginning that he would be sparing with it, instead he would leave something for Will to find, often wrapped in exquisite paper with silky ribbons. When Hannibal had accidentally snapped one of Will's fishing rods, he'd found a new one carefully wrapped and placed on the deck of their boat. State of the art of course. After an argument, Will found Hannibal's version of an apology, a book on fly tying, tucked against his pillow. A first edition, because Hannibal had always been and would always be a pretentious fuck. Origami roses, lilies, irises strewn across their bed when Hannibal fell asleep before they could make love, picking flowers that he'd noticed Will admiring. Gumbo when Hannibal felt the need to apologise for making Will endure one of his more pretentious meals.

Always personal, always thoughtful.

That wasn't to say his other gifts weren't special things. Sauvage for Will because he'd professed a liking for the scent and it being one Hannibal approved of. It was certainly a marked improvement on the ship-on-the-bottle cologne Will had worn for years. The Patek Philippe that adorned his wrist was another example. Stupidly expensive, but Hannibal had seen Will's eyes linger for just a moment, and the damned thing had turned up as a gift for his birthday.

Will had snarled when Hannibal suggested a Bentley, so an Audi R8 seemed to be his way of compromising. Will refused to admit he liked it, even if he was fully aware that his lover knew and was waiting for the perfect opportunity to exploit that fact.

When it came to buying for Hannibal, Will mined the field of art mostly. He would stealthily purchase first editions of any thing Dante related. He searched for work on Achilles and Patroclus. An Audemars Piguet for Hannibal's wrist. A case of Bâtard-Montrachet had the man weeping in Will's arms. Odd culinary paraphernalia was another area where Will could dive into and find something coveted for his husband.

That Will put thought into what he purchased for Hannibal forever made him emotional.

Will had come to understand that Hannibal, maskless with him, was endearingly sentimental. It was that sentimentality and the willingness to express it that finally softened Chiyoh.

Whenever she visited them, where ever they were, she would invariably avoid Will as much as possible. Will, for his part, would let her. He understood her reticence, understood the thinly disguised animosity and less disguised disdain. He had given her enough reason to loathe him.

But he was never afraid of her. To kill him would be to invite Hannibal's unceasing wrath.

Once Chiyoh had settled herself in which ever guest room Hannibal had set aside for her, he would take her on a tour of their new abode, gleefully, pridefully, pointing out things that Will had given him, stroking them with a soft smile. Chiyoh would shoot Will a mildly surprised look then turn her attention back to the man leading her about the house, listening to his enthusiastic spiel with a knowing air, head tilted ever so slightly.

Will knew he'd been accepted by her when she told him he was no longer Nakama. "You are koibito." She paused, mischief dancing in her dark eyes, "and Sōrumeito."

"Koibito?" Will assessed her enigmatic smile. "Lovers?" he guessed. "The other?"

She inclined her head, "soulmates." She gestured at the tea set in front of her, asking silently. Will lowered himself onto the tatami and knelt opposite her as she poured them both a cup.

"Have I finally proved myself to you?"

Chiyoh didn't roll her eyes, she was too controlled for that, but she did fix him with an implacable stare. "It appears you know other methods, not just violence."

Will's lip quirked, "yes, but I can *share* the violence with Hannibal."

She hummed at that, clearly turning it over in her mind before she spoke again. "He forgave you for throwing him off the cliff."

It wasn't a question. Will raised a brow at her, knowing that had grated on her and she'd left it unspoken for too long. "He understood that I couldn't let him be caged, nor could I let them kill him. It was…my way of letting us either die together or live together."

"Ahh," she murmured softly, raising her cup to her lips to sip delicately. "He suspected something of the sort, I believe. He had me bring the boat close and wait." She averted her eyes for a moment, then drilled them into Will's, "I have a subject to broach with you."

He waved his hand, "go ahead."

Her eyes flitted away again, her fingers a little restless on her cup. Will actually felt her hesitation and nerves, something that he had never experienced in her proximity. "I have yet to speak of it to Hannibal as I am not sure how he will take it. It is a…difficult subject with many unpleasant associations." She sighed deeply, "though, I have no doubt he will be expecting it at this juncture."

"You want me to…what? Speak to him for you? Feel him out?"

"I wish for you to convince him to take a trip. Before it is too late." For the first time, Will *saw* visceral emotion from her. "Lady Murasaki is…"

Will closed his eyes, trying to ward off the intense grief coming from Chiyoh. "I understand. You think Hannibal should see her before…"

"Yes." She reached across the low table and gripped his hand, eyes beseeching, "please, neither will speak of the other, they are both too proud to let their names pass one another's lips, yet they need to speak, one last time before they no longer can. She would like to know he is happy and I think he needs to know she is at peace."

Will withdrew his hand, scrubbing it down his face, "shit." He leaned back, shaking his head ruefully, "I don't know, Chiyoh. I agree with you, they need this goodbye, but I am not sure I'll be able to convince him. Your mistress is one of the very few subjects he is hesitant to speak of."

Chiyoh nodded in understanding. "Yet, he *does* speak of her to you. He changes the subject when I try."

Will lowered his gaze, letting her have a moment after that admission, musing how slippery Hannibal could be when he wished to deflect. "I…I can try."

Chiyoh visibly relaxed, "Hannibal is my family. Lady Murasaki tied us together. And now, you are his family too. This means that *we* are family, Will. I have learned to trust you, and so, I must trust you with this."

The argument that they had when Will tried to talk to Hannibal about going to Japan raged for days and resulted in several pieces of broken furniture. No matter how pissy Hannibal got, Will dug his heels in, refusing to allow Hannibal to slink off and sulk.

Chiyoh had made herself scarce, much to Hannibal's annoyance. The only person he could rage at was Will. Normally this kind of rage resulted in deaths, likely multiples, but that avenue of expression was denied him. So Hannibal sulked as only he could.

The only saving grace was the fact Hannibal hadn't retreated to his mind palace, possibly because he knows that Will shares rooms and would follow him there to berate him further. Instead, he broods silently, petulant.

He can never ignore Will for very long though, especially when he clambers into Hannibal's lap and cups his face, thumbs stroking his sharp cheekbones, sighing at the bruise on his jaw from Will's errant fist the day before when Hannibal had been especially dickish, making him meet his gaze. Will almost laughs at the reversal. It used to be him that couldn't look into anyone's eyes, and now it's Hannibal that tries to shift his gaze.

"Talk to me," he whispered, searching the maroon gaze of his husband. "Why is this so hard for you?" He felt anger, betrayal, deep respect and confusion roiling off Hannibal as he looked at him. Lady Murasaki had understood, if not accepted, what Hannibal had done to the butcher. She had helped to conceal the first murder he had committed.

Hannibal had told him that she had left for Japan when he'd found the last of the men who had killed his sister. But he hadn't really explained why.

Hannibal winced, reading the question in Will's eyes. "She left me," he murmured, mouth turned down. "Lady Murasaki was the first person I opened up to, even if it wasn't fully. The first person I spoke to after years of silence. She used my regard against me, trying to seduce me into abandoning my quest to avenge Mischa." His eyes flitted away, then unerringly found Will's again. "When I did not take the bait, she left me." He inhaled deeply, shakily, "she professed to care for me, yet she left me."

Ahh.

Now Will understood the confusion. Hannibal had been so young, already having lost his whole family and then Lady Murasaki had tried to manipulate him with sex. The exotic woman attempting to use her feminine wiles. Far too trite. And certainly not a ploy that would work on someone like Hannibal. It was clumsy. But maybe, it was the only way that she had known how to influence him.

It also explained why Hannibal had never let anyone in.

Lady Murasaki had *seen* Hannibal, tried to use that to her advantage, and then left him. Rejected him. Shit. Will had done something very similar. No wonder he'd felt so betrayed. Will thought he'd truly understood before, but now he really gets it.

"I'm sorry," he said, stroking Hannibal's cheek knowing his love would pick up on what he meant.

Hannibal sucked in a breath, his head dropping to Will's shoulder, silently accepting the apology for what it was. His arms wound around Will's waist, clinging. "I have been able to speak of her to you as someone distant in my past, however…"

"Now, I'm asking you to bring her into the present, for however short a time." He ran his fingers through Hannibal's hair, smiling softly at the longer strands. "She's dying, brangusis. This will be the last chance you have to lay that ghost to rest. Properly."

Hannibal's eyes flashed, "is this part of a form of psychoanalysing me." The familiar smirk that had been absent for days reappeared. "You won't like me when I'm psychoanalysed."

Holding back a snort of amusement, Will shook his head, not bothering to hide his smile. This was his Hannibal. His glorious, ridiculously pedantic people eater. "I'm not going to ask you to do it for me," he said slowly. "I'm going to ask you to do it for yourself, Hannibal."

The red in Hannibal's eyes glowed. "Ahh, mangustėli," he crooned. "Very clever. You do not wish to see me grieve without saying my goodbye, and it would hurt you to see me that way. Which I am aware of. And I have no wish to see you hurting."

Will shot him a lopsided smile, knowing he'd won. He dipped his head and pressed a kiss to Hannibal's lips, "I'll book the flights."

"Freddie thinks she's placating us," Will commented mildly as he perused the TattleCrime site, sans Murder Husbands.

Hannibal hummed, "yes, I believe so. The last article to focus on us was the one in regards to Bedelia. We are only mentioned briefly since that." He glanced at Will, a look full of righteous indignation. "She refused to post our wedding picture."

Will can't help it, laughing and covering his face. It's not Hannibal's vanity that's been upset, though, God knows the man is incredibly vain. It's the pride he has in Will being his husband that's been poked at. And it's a sore that's been festering since Hannibal sent the email. It's been over five years and Hannibal is still pissed about the photo. He raised an arched brow at Hannibal, fully aware that this man surrendered and placed himself in a cage for three years, content to wait until Will came to see him. As impetuous as Hannibal can be, the man can be as unbending as stone. But Will is the water that wears away at him.

Or acid as the case may be.

Will pointedly tilted his head in the direction of the full version of the wedding photo adorning the wall behind his husband. "I prefer the one on our wall," he drawled, purposely letting his accent linger in his tone.

Hannibal inhaled sharply, the whiskey colour of his eyes swallowed by his pupils, stalking towards Will in measured paces, languid, fluid, graceful still. "So beautiful," he murmured, knuckles glancing over Will's cheek. "Then and now. Always," he insisted.

The pure affection and adoration melted Will, leaning into the touch, capturing Hannibal's hand before he could retract it, kissing his palm, "so are you."

Hannibal tried to affect a benign expression, yet his pleasure bleeds through regardless, though many wouldn't notice it. Will can. Blatantly.

"The beginning of always," Hannibal murmured, when Will's eyes shifted from his to the photo again.

Will bent his head, resting it on Hannibal's shoulder, smiling at the truncated quote from his favourite poet. "No, it began long before that, brangusis. We were inevitable, no matter how much I tried to deny it. No matter how much we both tried to fuck it up. It brought us to a point of no return."

Hannibal smirked at that, hand curling around the back of Will's head and sinking into his curls, greying now, but still so soft to his touch. "And then you pulled us over the edge."

Will was delighted to see Hannibal indulging in their usual banter. He'd been so subdued during and after their trip to Japan, clearly working through the emotions seeing Lady Murasaki prompted. The mask hadn't come down, however. He'd remained open to Will, expressive when they were alone, burying his face into Will's neck as he fought to breathe calmly, trembling in Will's arms as he whispered his thoughts.

"I have always scorned the idea of fate. I bent life to my will and mine alone. Then I met you. Completely unpredicted and unpredictable. Before you, I felt myself to be alone, something so utterly *other* that I thought I would remain in solitude, never understood, for the whole of my life." Hannibal paused, meeting Will's eyes for a moment, before they shift away, staring into the dark corner of the room. "Before you, only Mischa provoked such emotions in me. Lady Murasaki came close, but then she left me without a backward glance. Or so it seemed. I know now that she regretted her actions, but pride on both our parts held us back from re-establishing the tentative bond we had formed."

"I'm glad that you could both speak and come to an understanding." He doesn't say reconcile, it was too late for that exactly, but in the end they had settled.

Hannibal hummed, "yes. I have you to thank for that, mano širdie." His large hand cradled Will's cheek affectionately, "I was so curious about you. You had taken on the mythical status of a unicorn among my former profession. Meeting you exceeded everything I thought I knew. So many people all conforming to society, all wanting to be *liked*. And then there was you. Able to get into everyone's heads and feel what they did, feel that need to conform, to fit in, but you didn't really want it for yourself. You pretended at it, assumed a facade. I could see immediately that you truly didn't care to fit in. Your abrasive attitude to anyone that tried to pigeon-hole you." His thumb caressed Will's scarred cheek, "you fascinated me."

Will sees Hannibal's amusement dancing in his eyes at Will's own aborted eye roll. "Your fascination manifested in interesting ways, Doctor."

Another considering hum from Hannibal. "Yes, it did." His fingers toy with the top button on Will's shirt before slipping it free so he could touch Will's collarbones. "Fascination that soon turned to obsession. I loved my sister, I was preoccupied with Lady Murasaki, but you, Will, you I became utterly obsessed with. It is beyond love, beyond any trite explanations. I am in your thrall, always." He pressed a chaste kiss to Will's cheek, "it is you that allowed me to find a place where I could come to terms with my Aunt." Another kiss, "the only one that tried."

"Chiyoh tried," Will murmured, starting to sink into the sensual touches of his lover.

Hannibal shook his head minutely, "no, she wanted us to forgive. You helped me accept."

Will chuckled, "with a little less bloodshed than the way you helped me accept myself." Hannibal was dangerously close to rolling his eyes at that. He smiled up at him, one of the smiles that made Hannibal just a little loopy and lust dazed. "You are the darkness that

counters the light for me. It's not that I don't like the light, same as you. But, sometimes it's too blinding, having you there grounds me. I feel…balanced with you. Considering who we are and what we do, I know that sounds fucking weird, but it's true."

Hannibal pulled him into his arms, embracing him, nuzzling his cheek with his own, "I feel seen with you, loved, accepted. Content for the first time in my life. I always believed I couldn't have *this*, no matter how much I desired it, especially after I met you, however now I am…settled." He pulls back a little, spearing him open with his intense gaze, "and I will never let anyone take this from us."

"I won't either," Will assured him, not that he really needed to, but he wanted to say it. "Together, or not at all."

"Precisely," Hannibal agreed. "Aishiteru, Will. Issho ni Iru to Hotto suru. Daiji ni Shitai." He kissed Will's cheek tenderly, "mamoritai."

"Aishiteru," Will whispered back. He didn't know the other words, but he didn't need to. He could feel the sentiment. "Japanese?"

Hannibal smirked, "it felt fitting."

Will laughed, shaking his head against Hannibal's shoulder, "you're not going to be satisfied until I've learned every language you know."

"Perhaps," the older man demurred. "Perhaps it is more that I wish you to understand the many ways I wish to convey how I love you."

Will hummed, "ok, I can deal with that." He shot his husband a sweet smile, brushing the hair off his forehead, "aš tave myliu."

"Aš taip pat myliu tave, mano širdie."

Chapter End Notes

essentially this is it, though I may add an epilogue.
Rather than the Nazi occupation of Lithuania in WW2, to bring Hannibal's age into something closer to what is in the TV show, I have used the Russian occupation of the country instead, having Hannibal be a young man several years before the declaration of independence in March 1990. To have him in his mid to late forties as he is in the series, and Will in his late thirties (at the least, and there's plenty suggest he's closer to forty, with an age difference of around six years) I have chosen a birth date that would be in the late sixties for Hannibal. By the time of Lithuania declaring independence, Hannibal is long gone and only returns once, to the hunting lodge, not the castle, in order to bury

his sister's bones. In the scene where Hannibal tells Will about Vladis Grutas, it is a blend of what we know from Hannibal Rising and the TV show.

Lithuanian:
Mano širdis: - literally "my heart" [when directly addressing a person: "mano širdie"].
Dievinu: expresses the feeling of something that exceeds perfect, adoration
Aš tave myliu: I love you, very uncommonly said
Aš taip pat myliu tave: I love you too
Aš rimtai : I mean it.
Laukiu nesulaukiu: I wait, and I cannot wait
Mylimasis - basically "beloved".
Mano meilė [when directly addressing a person: mano meile] - very literally "my love"
Brangusis - basically "darling/dear/precious".
Mielasis - literally "cute/lovely/dear", but in essence close to "honey/sweetheart".
Mažius/mažiukas/mažasis [when directly addressing a person: mažiau/mažiuk/mažasis] - literally "the little one", but could be approximated to "baby/babe", however, more on the cute side without sexual connotations.
Širdelė [when directly addressing a person: širdele] - literally "little heart", but in essence close to "sweetheart"
Zuikis: [when directly addressing a person: zuiki] - literally "rabbit".
Katinas/katukas/kačiukas [when directly addressing a person: katine/katuk/kačiuk] - literally "male cat/kitten."
Meškius [when directly addressing a person: meškiau] - basically "bear/little bear." Approximately "teddy bear."
Mangustas: Mongoose [when directly addressing a person: mangustai.
Mangustėlis/mangustukas: little mongoose. [when directly addressing a person: mangustėli/mangustuk.
Neprieinamas: When someone tries really hard to seduce another, to no avail, Lithuanians would say they were neprieinama. It has a similar meaning to the English word unreachable, but it carries more power and emphasis on how impossible it is to end up with a person you love.
Nepakartojama: Lithuanians use this word to describe a perfect situation which will never happen again. The word literally translates to 'unable to repeat.' For example, if someone said šis vakaras buvo nepakartojama, it would mean something along the lines of 'this evening was beyond incredible'.
intelekto nesužalotu veidu: a face unharmed by intellect, "a fool."
Tu neturi ko bijoti : you have nothing to fear.
ji yra niekas, palyginti su tavimi : she is nothing, compared to you.

Japanese:
Aishiteru: I love you (very rarely voiced)
Issho ni Iru to Hotto suru: I feel safe when I'm with you.
Daiji ni Shitai: I treasure you.
Nakama: best friend.
Koibito: lover

Sōrumeito: soulmate
Mamoritai: I want to protect you.

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